

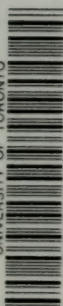
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# VICTORY IN DEFEAT



STANLEY WASHBURN

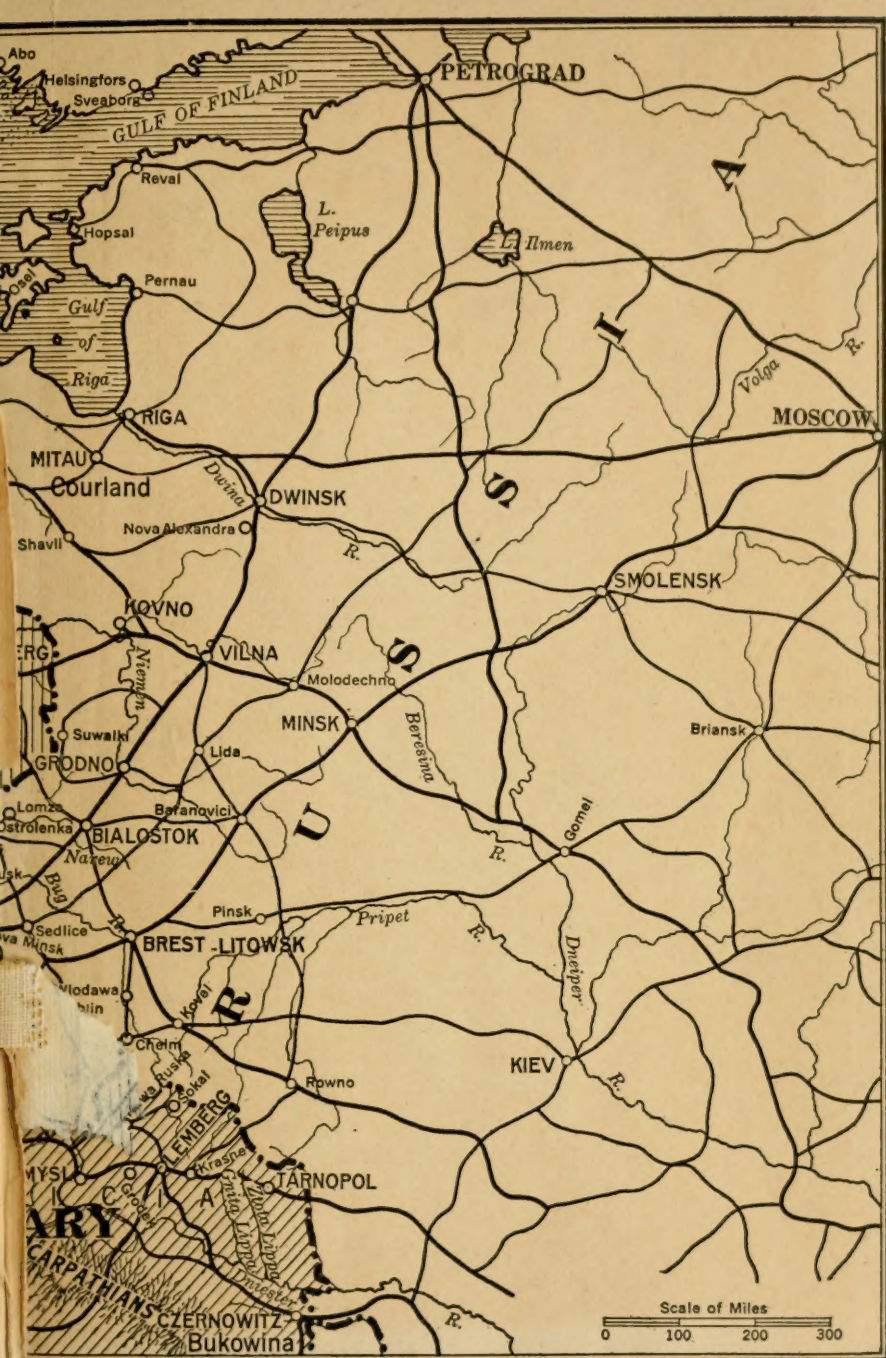
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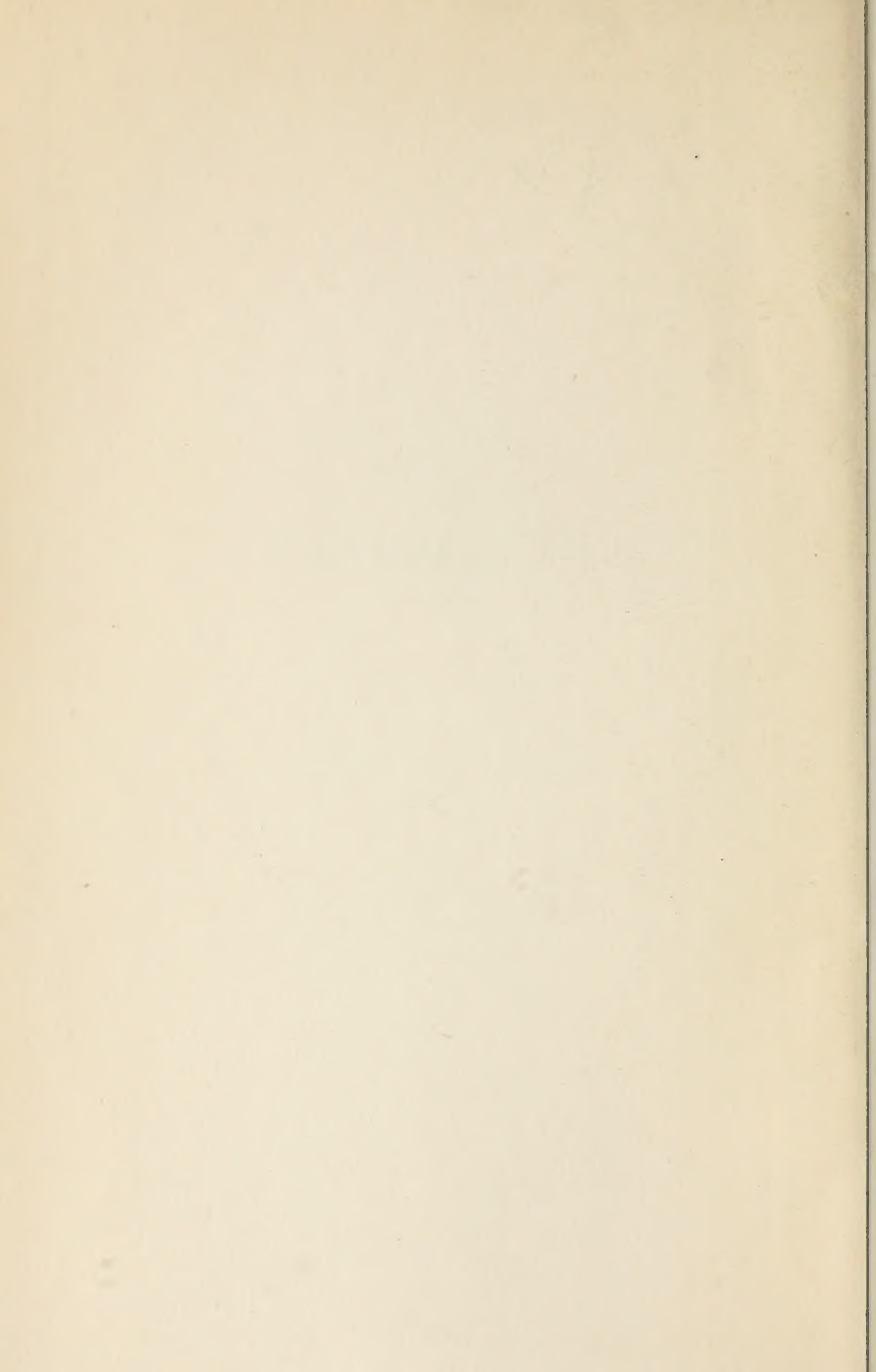
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# VICTORY IN DEFEAT







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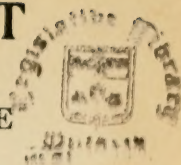
General Alexieff, Chief of Staff of the Russian Army



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# VICTORY IN DEFEAT

THE AGONY OF WARSAW AND THE  
RUSSIAN RETREAT



Russia

BY

STANLEY WASHBURN

*Special Correspondent of the London Times with  
the Russian Armies in the Field*

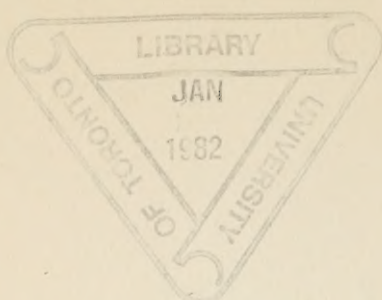


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CONSTABLE & CO., LTD.  
1916





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**TO  
MY WIFE**





## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

THE first sixteen articles which appear in this little volume were originally produced in the Chicago *Tribune*, and the author tenders his thanks for permission to reprint the same in book form. Chapter 17 is reproduced due to the courtesy of *Harper's Weekly*, and thanks are tendered to the London *Times* for the permission to republish the sketch of General Alexieff which appears in this book as Chapter 18.

S. W.

Lakewood, N. J.  
March 4, 1916.



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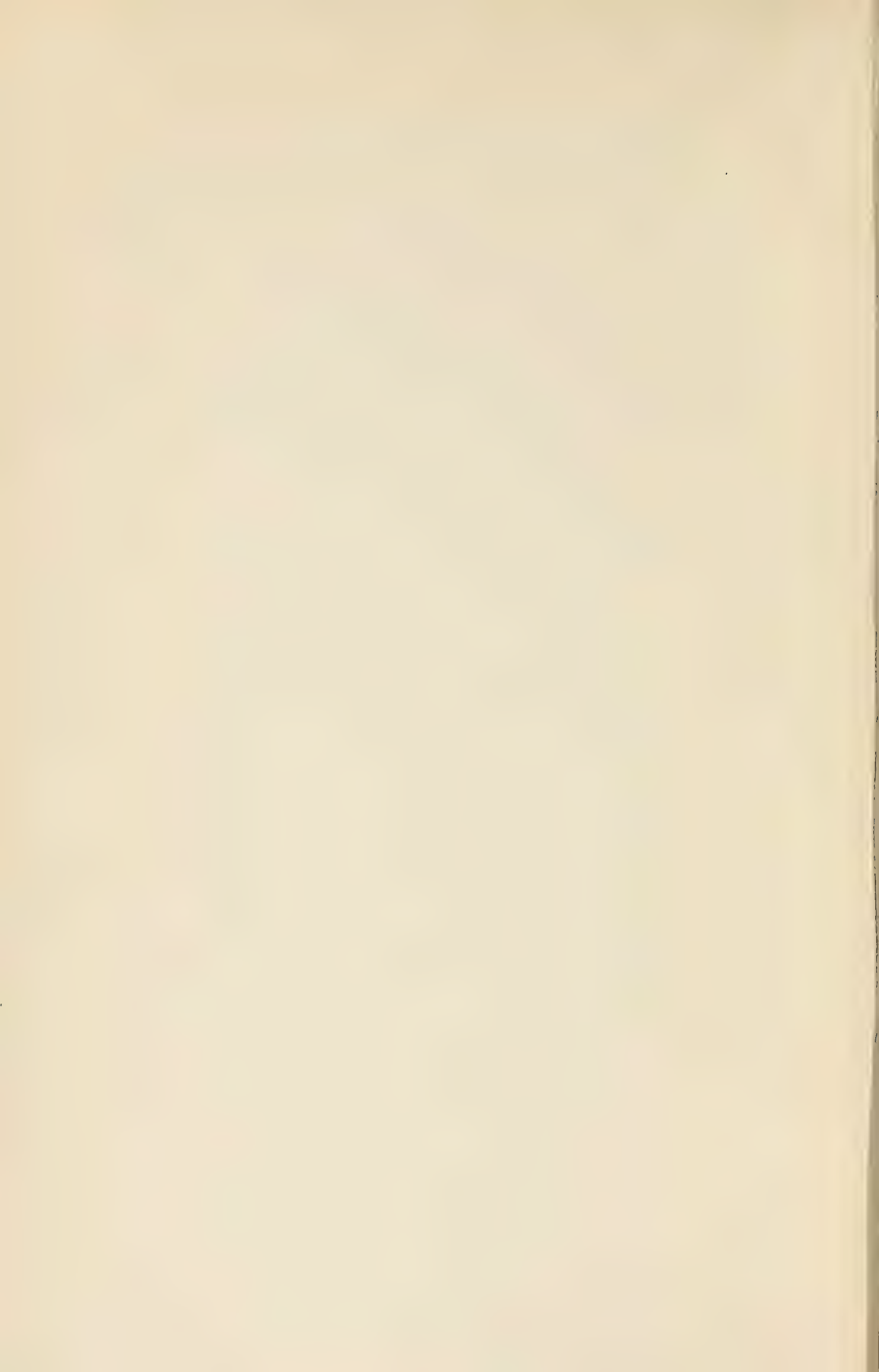
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## INTRODUCTION

THIS little volume has been written with the intention of presenting as far as possible at this time, and within the information available to the writer, the Russian side of the great campaign which ended in the capture of Warsaw by the Germans, and was followed by the great Russian retreat. There are many assets in war as there are in peace, and the greatest among these is character. Efficiency, preparation, and science have their innings at the beginning of a conflict, but the one enduring asset which a nation has is the character of its people. If time be given for this to develop, then the end is certain. The great crisis in Russia was during that period when the psychology of the nation was crystallizing, and when this had taken place the danger to Russia was largely passed. Certainly I would in no way minimize the strength, fortitude, and patriotism of the Germans, which have been

## INTRODUCTION

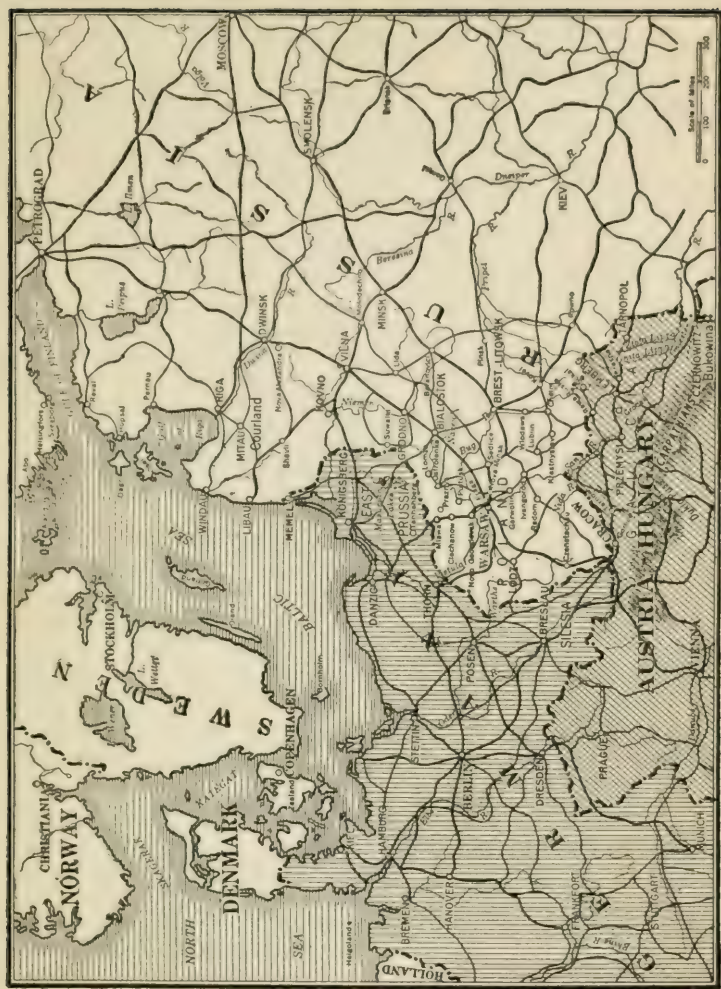
extraordinary from the beginning of the war, but I am still of the opinion that the greatest test of character is not in victory, but in defeat. It has seemed to me that the world has not appreciated the fact that there can be victory in defeat, but this is none the less true, when, as has happened in Russia, reverses have provided time in which the character of the nation has asserted itself, and the Empire has been able to repair its lack of vision before the war by preparing itself after the blow has fallen. This is what has happened in the Empire of the Czar, and it is for this reason that I am calling this little book "Victory in Defeat," for I believe that the Russian reverses have been so costly and demoralizing to their victors, that history will judge them as the greatest single source of the German downfall, which is in my opinion inevitable whether it be in six months or in two years.

S. W.

Lakewood, N. J.

March 1, 1916.





General map showing places mentioned in the text



## VICTORY IN DEFEAT



# VICTORY IN DEFEAT

## I

### FOREWORD

THE Russian campaign has from the beginning of the war been one of great and sweeping movements involving huge armies, advancing and retreating, sometimes victorious, sometimes defeated, but always fighting and never demoralized nor discouraged. There have been a number of distinct phases in Russia each of which really represents a small separate war. First was the Russian advance into East Prussia, culminating in the disaster of Samsonov's Army at Tanenberg the first month of the war. Following this was the German counter-attack and advance into Russia with its failure to advance with any depth, and subsequent evaporation. Simul-



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taneously was being enacted the Russian campaign in Galicia which cleaned the Austrians out of Galicia and advanced the armies of the Czar to the very walls of historic Cracow. In October, 1914, in Poland itself was the phase of the first German invasion of Poland which took the Teutons to within sight of Warsaw only to get a glimpse of their cherished goal before they were forced back to their own frontier. The next phase was the second great German advance in Poland with the terrific battles around Lodz and a dozen heavy battles which brought them by December up to the famous Bzura line in Poland; there, with exhausted momentum, they sank into the mud and snow of December. For a month there was a lull along the Russian front, when in latter January there opened a new campaign, beginning on the Bolimov position before Warsaw, with seven days of continuous German attacks which it was hoped would pierce the centre of the Bzura line and land the

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Teutons in the capital of Poland. Casualties involving nearly 100,000 in a week and resulting in scarcely a dent on the Russian line convinced the Germans that this was a hope unattainable, and while the echoes of the guns on the Polish plain were still in the air they began another drive in East Prussia which resulted in heavy Russian losses but profited the Germans little but the gain of a few square miles of Russian territory, and a heavy loss of German lives with no commensurate gain. But the Germans were not discouraged, and the moment it became obvious that the Russian retreat in East Prussia was going to have no great strategic value to them they at once swung south from Mlawka toward Przasnys in an endeavor to take Warsaw from the north by cutting the line between the Polish Capital and Petrograd. Fighting had now been going forward on a huge scale for nearly two months, and by early March the impetus of even the Germans was beginning to flag and their drive

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south from Mława was a flat failure, resulting in their retirement with heavy losses, including nearly 15,000 prisoners. By April 1, 1915, it became clear then, that, viewed from its larger aspects, the German campaign against Russia had failed. Territory they had taken to be sure, and battles they had won in large numbers, but the centre of their strategy, Warsaw, still lay as far from their grasp as in December, 1914, and the Russian Army not only was not demoralized but was actually getting stronger each day. In the meantime the armies of the Czar were steadily winning their way through the Carpathians and in general having things their own way in Galicia. Almost on the heels of the German failures to get results around Warsaw in March came the collapse of Przemyśl and the surrender of 135,000 Austrians. Thus we find that by April 1, 1915, the Germans after terrific losses and sustained fighting of months had accomplished comparatively little, while the

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Russians, in spite of reverses, were gaining ground steadily against Austria. The fall of Przemyśl came at a time when the Russian armies in the southeast were sweeping steadily ahead in the Bukowina, driving the Hungarians and Austrians headlong toward the great Hungarian plain. The result of the German failure in the north plus the Russian successes in the south was having the most disastrous effect imaginable on the soldiers of the Dual Alliance. Hungary, seeing a direct menace on Buda-Pesthe, both from the Bukowina and the passes of the Carpathians, became dissatisfied and began to show signs of consideration of a separate peace. General Ivanov himself, who was in command of all the Russian armies in Galicia, told me that the situation in Austria-Hungary was becoming so acute that there was every probability that unless some step were taken by Germany and taken quickly, that the Empire of the Kaiser faced the possibility of the complete collapse of his Allies.

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It became obvious to all then in April that if the Kaiser was to protect his "heel of Achilles" in Silesia he must do something to bolster up the Austrians and Hungarians, who showed only too clearly their anxiety to quit. Probably the politicians and diplomats at Vienna never shared this desire, but that the troops at the front were ready to make peace was perfectly clear. I was told by an authority whose credibility I cannot question that when the news of the fall of Przemyśl reached the Austrians on the summit of the Carpathians they threw their hats in the air and shouted: "Hurrah! Now we will have peace!" This situation then, plus the fact that Italy was hanging on the brink of the war, was undoubtedly responsible for the program of the Germans which began with the drive in Galicia and the subsequent campaign which resulted in the capture of Warsaw. This movement began in early May and the operations since then fall into three distinct phases. First, the Galician



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drive which aimed to restore the morale of the Austro-Hungarian troops, to check Italy from entering the war, and which contemplated the destruction of the Russian Army. The Germans, never lacking in foresight, no doubt figured that in any event, even if they failed to demoralize or annihilate the Russian Army, the reoccupation of Galicia would leave them on the flank of Warsaw and give them the chance to attack the Polish salient from the south. The second phase extended from the occupation of Lwow (Lemberg) to the capture of Warsaw, including the terrific fighting on the Chelm-Lublin and Narew line. The third phase represents the retreat from Warsaw and brings us practically up to November 1, 1915, when it became obvious that the entire German line had come to a final stand and that its momentum was lost, probably for the winter, and certainly for the fall.

It is my purpose to sketch as briefly as possible the operations of the Russian Army

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from May 1st until November 1st. In order that the conditions precedent may be clear it has seemed wise to trace the earlier operations briefly as in the foregoing paragraphs, so as to refreshen in the mind of the reader the conditions that existed in May when the Germans began their greatest campaign against Russia. The writer was with the Russian armies in the field from October, 1914, until November 1, 1915. During this time he was in all of their active armies except one, covered some 10,000 miles of country ranging from the Bukowina to the Baltic, was at the positions in scores of places, and with the exception of Robert R. McCormick and the brilliant American Military Attaché, Lieut. Sherman Miles, was the only American to have any considerable access to the fighting lines in Russia. It is quite true that constant association with an army tends to prejudice one in its favor, and it is equally true that in operations on so vast a scale and associated

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with such chaos and confusion it is difficult to secure any exact perspective. The story of these movements and operations may be and probably is inaccurate in part, for it is impossible at this time to secure the data necessary to write history, but within his sources of information and with the sincere intention of being absolutely fair to the enemy the writer submits herewith the account of this great campaign as it has seemed to those on the Russian side of the conflict.

## II

### THE MOVE ON WARSAW VIA GALICIA

THE Russian line in Galicia early in May ran in a general way along the banks of the Dunajec-Ropa-Biala rivers, extending roughly from the Vistula southerly to the spurs of the Carpathians, through which the Army of Brussilov based on Dukla was working its way satisfactorily through the famous Dukla Pass. To understand the situation of the Russians it must be realized that already the armies of the Czar were beginning to feel the pinch of a shortage in ammunition and in miscellaneous material of war. The reason for this lack of munitions, especially shells, was not due entirely to incompetence and corruption, though undoubtedly glaring defects in the Petrograd Bureaucracy played their part,



Eastern battle-lines at the end of April, 1915







## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

but rather to the fact that the Russians as well as every other belligerent save Germany had completely underestimated the quantities of material that modern conditions would make necessary. The War Office no doubt planned their reserves in shells based on their Manchurian experiences, when this war has shown that nearly ten times the amounts have been used. This is probably due in large part to the fact that the new Russian field gun is a genuine quick-firer with a theoretical speed of more than twenty shots a minute. In the early stages of the war I knew of one battery that fired 525 rounds of ammunition per gun in a single day, and by spring the pinch was already being felt. Russia is not a highly industrial country, and even when she mobilized such assets as she had, she could not begin to feed her guns. Shut off from the short and convenient routes to the outside world, she found that even when material ordered could be shipped her, it must still be long and weary

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weeks before it could reach the firing line. So it was that early in May she faced the enemy lines in Galicia with the realization of this problem just dawning on those in authority. On the line from the Vistula to the Carpathians stood the famous Third Russian Army, commanded by the Bulgarian Radko Dimitrieff, who had won fame in the Balkan campaign as a military commander. In his front line and immediate reserve he had five army corps, or somewhere in the neighborhood of 200,000 troops, for the corps were at that time fairly well filled up from earlier losses.

The lines running west of Tarnov and before Gorlica had been approximately stationary for several months, during which time the enemy had been practising with their artillery at least twice a day, with the result that on this entire front the batteries had the range within a few feet of practically every conspicuous object in the landscape which was within

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

their line of vision, while every turn and twist of the Russian trenches had been verified and mapped by the enemy aeroplanes, and ranges ascertained almost to the inch. Along toward the end of April the Russian flyers became aware of the concentration of troops and material in the theatre of operations west of Tarnov. Many people have asked me why the Russians did not meet it on the same scale. The answer is simple. Though the Russians have millions of men and even plenty in uniform and under training, they did not have the rifles to put in their hands nor the guns and shells which should give them support. In addition the Russian railroad systems were in no way comparable, strategically, to those of the Germans and Austrians, and they could not fling masses of troops about from one quarter of the empire to another as the Germans have been able to do. Besides this, the Russian front extending from the Baltic to the Bukowina had already absorbed the greater part of the Russian

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effectives and they could not easily increase their strength on the Dunajec without robbing the even more important Warsaw or Courland fronts, on both of which the enemy were not entirely inactive. What happened on the Dunajec line was the first of the great German artillery drives. I cannot, of course, verify the statements as to numbers of the enemy, but I give here the figures as estimated by the Russians. In addition to a number of Austrian corps already on the Galician line, the Germans sent at least six new corps for the first blow, while some place the number as high as ten. The sector chosen for attack was that lying from Tarnov toward Gorlica. The Russian observers quickly detected during the last days of April the hitherto unheard of concentration of guns which they estimated to be 2,000 in number on a front of forty miles. These guns were said to be grouped in tiers, one battery behind another, the heaviest being in the rear. The



Beginning of the Teutonic advance in Galicia, May 1, 1915







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sizes ranged all the way from the regular field artillery up to the heavy Austrian siege guns. It was claimed by the Russians that in this host of guns there were 200 of eight inches or better. Probably the largest were the Austrian 12-inch Skoda howitzers. There was little that the Russians could do to guard against this impending avalanche save to wait patiently for the storm to break and do their best to outlive the fury of shell and machine-gun fire with the hope that they could then repel the infantry attacks which were sure to follow. The storm broke on a front of forty miles which was held by three corps, the more particular designation of which does not help this story. In two hours the enemy batteries fired, according to the Russian estimates, 700,000 shells ranging from the field shrapnel up to the 12-inch high explosives. The Russians were not routed, as the Germans asserted, at all. They simply remained and died. The few that tried to retire on supporting lines were

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caught in the open, where every object on the landscape had been ranged on exactly, long before, and thousands more were literally swept away. The first line of the Russian defense was so torn and swept by shell fire that observers say that it could not have been recognized as ever having been a line of defense at all. But in spite of the fury of the first two hours the Russians did not then abandon their lines. We are told that it took between three and four million shells finally to weaken them so that the infantry could attack. I have no figures obtainable to indicate what portion of the losses were killed, what portion wounded, or what part strayed and were taken prisoners. I do know this, however, that when the fragments of the three centre corps which had numbered 120,000 at the beginning were finally pulled together on the San, 100 miles or so in the rear, two weeks later, the total strength that rallied around the colors did not exceed 12,000.

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

The result of this terrific fusillade, in plain language, was to leave a gap in the Russian line forty miles across, and through this the Germans and Austrians poured like a leak in the dyke. Hurriedly rushed-up reserves taken from where they could be spared fought a rear-guard action of sorts, destroying railroads and bridges, so that the German advance was slowed down to not more than three or four miles a day.

The flanking corps to the north and south of the gap fell back fighting steadfastly against the terrific odds, but as far as I know were not broken. The capture of Gorlica and the advance on Dukla threatened the line of communications of the Eighth Army that was well over the summit of the Carpathians. The Germans, no doubt, figured on bagging this entire army, which indeed they might have done but for the skill and brilliancy with which Brussilov pulled his men out of the Passes. In spite of all haste one division was cut off

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as it came out, though it succeeded in cutting its way through the enemy and rejoining the main body now falling back on Przemyśl. In the meantime the Russians were furiously preparing for a stand on the San, and to gain time threw against the advancing German hosts several corps, among which was the famous Third Caucasian, which not only stopped the advance for several days but actually advanced ten miles into the German centre before it was brought to a standstill. The other armies had been extending their flanks as they fell back, and by the time the enemy reached the San they found the forty-mile gap closed up and much to their surprise, no doubt, saw they were again confronting a solid Russian line, already fairly well dug in on the San line of defense. This ended the first phase of the Galician drive. To one who knows the true situation the wonder is, not that the Germans advanced, but that they did not annihilate the Russian Army in

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Galicia. But their chance had gone, and though they had recaptured for Austria a large area and had killed and bagged a large number of Russians, the big game had slipped through their fingers and the primary object of the blow, *i. e.*, the destruction of the Russian Army, had failed.

### III

#### THE READJUSTMENT IN GALICIA

IN THE modern warfare, with its huge extended fronts, there develops in every theatre of operations what might be called the keystone of the strategy therein. The breaking of a certain line on a large scale results in the pulling out of the keystone of the arch and resulting chaos in the whole line, though it may be that but a single army of many has been seriously crippled in itself. This is exactly what took place in Galicia. At the inception of the movement the three centre corps of the Third Army, as already mentioned, were practically wiped out and the whole Galician line thrown into oscillation. The one sector being broken and the one army being thrown back necessitated changes in the whole front, even



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from Warsaw to the Bukowina. The army of General Ewarts (the Fourth) which had been standing defiantly for months just north of the Vistula on the Nida River, found with the retreat of its southern neighbor, that its flank was dangerously uncovered. It was obvious instantly that for the salvation of the whole line the corps of Ewarts (then four in number) must commence a retirement which would always keep the flanking corps in touch with the nearest corps of the army to its left. So immediately after the Galician drive Ewarts began to fall regretfully back in what one might call a sympathetic movement. As I was in this army several times during this movement I can speak with some degree of accuracy of what the Germans advertised as a rout. I have been in all of Ewarts' Fourth Army Corps except one and have talked with officers and men from all of these units. There was not one but insisted that this army not only was not compelled by any local situation to

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retreat, but that had it been operating without any connection with the line as a whole, it could actually have advanced. It is too late in the war to go in for a detailed discussion of the tactics of Ewarts' retreat, which is stale history now. Suffice it to say, however, that while the Fourth Army was changing its front to a more easterly position two of its corps alone accounted for more than 25,000 German and Austrian casualties and prisoners, with a loss to themselves of less than half that amount. The Germans who rushed on with the idea that the road to Moscow lay open before them kept running into the rear guards of Ewarts, who were literally being dragged back by a leash due to orders of the Great General Staff, and at every contact the Russians, regardless of orders, broke loose and landed blow after blow on the Germans and Austrians, first in one place and then in another. So much, then, may be said for the "rout" of Ewarts. The Third Army, standing on the ill-fated line of

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the Dunajec, was, as I have described, practically wiped out, and its disaster was responsible for the whole retreat. The next army was the Eighth, commanded by the dashing cavalry officer, Brussilov, who never until this time had been obliged to retire. This army was caught halfway through the Passes of the Carpathians, and in the disaster of its northern neighbor its right flank was exposed and badly crumbled, but, by extending its front to the north and pulling together at Przemyśl, it was able to check the momentum of the onrushing Germans on the San. We are invited to believe by the Central Powers that the San battle was a pitched one and that both that and the ones that followed on the old Grodek line and around Lwow were great victories. The facts of the case are, and I speak with the authority of the highest command in Galicia, that from the first day's fighting on the San it was decided by the Russians practically to give up Galicia for the

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT.

moment. The Germans and Austrians were receiving reinforcements hourly, and a definite stand at any point meant a combat under conditions favorable to the Germans and an invitation to them to deliver a crushing blow. The want of ammunition had now become acute, and I know of certain Russian batteries on the San at this time that had not above a score of rounds of ammunition to the gun. Przemyśl was not in a state of defense, as repairs on the works destroyed by the Austrians before the surrender to the Russians in March had not yet been completed. Holding Przemyśl, then, was like trying to hold a ruin, and when the Germans began to bring up their heavy guns the holding of the fortress was not even considered by the Russian higher command. Reinforcements were not available to the Muscovites on an important scale, while the whole railroad system of Germany was working overtime that the Galician blow might not falter. One in Germany at this time stated that for

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days on end the railroad lines of Eastern Germany were flooded with troops moving eastward and wounded coming back from Galicia. This witness stated that for the three consecutive days in which he had opportunity to make observations, there was a double-headed train passing eastward every fifteen minutes loaded to the roof with troops and munitions. The Russian information brought the same news. It was quite obvious, then, that it was the Russian policy to withdraw, fighting a rear-guard action, and inflicting the biggest loss that they could get without risking their army to a crushing defeat. From the San until the present writing the Galician armies have never been seriously endangered. The Dunajec drive, as I have shown, was the result of the enormous concentration of artillery and months of practice preceding it, which had secured the accurate ranges. Neither on the San nor at any other point did the Germans have the opportunity to bring up any such mass



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of guns. As soon as their concentrations, looking toward a repetition of the early May movement, began to gather head, the Russians retired. It was evident that the balance would come sooner or later, when the lengthened German lines and the shortened Russian communications would adjust the scales and bring the whole line to a standstill once more. Thus it was that the Russians held Przemyśl and the San line for a while and took a large toll of casualties from the enemy, and just as they were in a position to be rushed, evacuated it only to make a second stand on the so-called Grodek line, the scene of the Austrian defeat of the preceding September campaign. When the Germans had massed their formations and artillery for a crushing blow on this line, the Russians fell back on Lwów, and after repeating their tactics before the Galician capital, again retired to the so-called Krasne line, where they remained for several months, having safely eluded the momentum of the





Battle-lines, May 23, 1915



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main German blow. In the meantime there had been two other armies to the east engaged in this movement. The neighbor of Brussilov was the Eleventh Army, which retired from its advanced Carpathian position from which it was threatening the Hungarian plain to the Dneister River, then to the Gnita Lippa position, and later to the Ztota Lippa and a little farther east to what is approximately its position to-day. This army was widely advertised as a ruined and routed organization. The commander told me himself that in the six weeks of his retreat his army had taken more than 56,000 enemy prisoners, not to speak of the losses he inflicted in killed and wounded. That he lost heavily in stragglers and casualties of his own is probably true, but the loss he inflicted was without doubt greater than his own. His neighbor army to the eastward was the Ninth. I spent a week in this army during the last days of the retreat and was at the positions in many places.

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Every man I talked with denied that this army had been defeated locally, and without exception every officer I talked with stated emphatically that it could advance any day against its own enemy but for the orders of the higher command. This forced it to retreat to keep in touch with the Eleventh, which (as I have shown) came back to be in touch with the Eighth, whose flank in turn had been exposed by the destruction of the Third Army, the keystone of the whole line. I am inclined to take the statements made me in the Ninth Army, because the records show that it was actually advancing daily in the Bukowina theatre of operations for eight or ten days after the Germans were driving through in Western Galicia. The news of the first week in January, 1916, from the Russian front shows the capacity of this army which has been bearing the brunt of the fighting on the recent Russian offensive and indicates that the assertions made to me in July were not ill-founded; for the mo-

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

ment the higher command unleashed this army it at once poured back into the very theatre of operations from which it had retired last summer. In regard to the assertions of the number of prisoners taken I must admit that these were obtained from Russian sources which naturally never minimize their own prowess. I am inclined to accept it at par, however, due to the fact that I personally saw over 6,000 prisoners in three days taken during the retreat toward Tarnopol in early July from the scene of the fighting around the Gnita and Ztota Lippa, both of which, by the way, were heralded in the German press as great Austro-German victories.

## IV

### SUMMATION OF THE GALICIAN CAMPAIGN

SUFFICIENT time has elapsed since the great German drive in Galicia to get a fair perspective of exactly what it represented to the German cause and what effect it had on the Russian fortunes. As I have said before, the objects of the campaign were manifold and were perhaps important in the following order: First, to brace up the Austrians and Hungarians and thus check the possibility of decay of the Dual Alliance. Second, to create sufficient moral impression on the world at large by the glamour of success to keep Italy from entering the war. The third aim was distinctly a military one, and that was to destroy the Russian Army in Galicia on such a scale as to force Russia to begin the

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contemplation of a separate peace. The last object, and the most farseeing, was to create a strategic situation which, even if all others failed, would leave the Germans in a position in Galicia which would pave their way toward an attack on Warsaw—always their greatest eastern objective—from the south.

Let us consider, in the light of subsequent events, the extent to which they realized their aspirations. There is no question but that the sweeping successes and recapture of Galicia absolutely checked the danger of Austria or Hungary being teased into any separate peace, or even listening to arguments against the war. The restoration of Galicia gave the Dual Monarchy a new lease of life and the court and political military in Vienna something to talk about except defeats. The effect, however, on the morale of the soldiers at the front was far from what was hoped. I was told in early July by the highest command in Galicia that the morale of the Austrian



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soldiers had been falling steadily since the recapture of Przemyśl. This seemed to me at the time to be quite illogical and entirely improbable. But in the succeeding weeks I visited every army in Ivanov's group, and saw and talked with many prisoners and with dozens of the Russian officers whose duty it was to cross-examine the captured prisoners. The point of view of the man in the trench was this: "We entered this war with a moderate amount of enthusiasm because we love the Emperor Franz Joseph and are loyal to our country. During the first part of the war we fought as hard and bravely as we could. The Russians beat us in front of Lemberg and took the capital of Galicia. We stood again and fought on the Grodek line. We lost horribly and were again defeated. The Russians, who care nothing for their own losses, drove us back to the Carpathians and then over them. We lost Przemyśl. We were fairly beaten. We were sorry, but we had done the best we

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could. Anyway, Galicia is not absolutely necessary to us. After the loss of Przemyśl, we thought there would be peace and that we would go home to our families. Then the Germans came down here. We are not very keen about them anyway, as they lord it over us, and their common soldiers do not conceal the fact that they hold us in contempt. The Germans took back Przemyśl for us and then Lwow (Lemberg) and have driven the Russians practically out of Galicia. That part is very nice, but if the war goes on a long time—and now it looks as though it would—the Germans will ultimately have to take their troops back to fight the French and the English or the Russians in the north. Then we will be left alone. The Russians will attack again. Our officers will make us fight for Lemberg. Again we will be defeated by the Russians, and our losses will be even worse than before. We will have to fight again on the Grodek line, and again we will be driven

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back to the Carpathians. The result for us will be another year of war, losses, and misery, which will be net to us and nothing gained, and we owe it all to the Germans." This pretty well sums up, then, the failure of the German advance to inspire enthusiasm in the Austrian troops and accounts for the huge numbers of Austrians which the Russians took, even as they retreated. So the first aim of the Germans was but fulfilled in part. The second hope to create a moral impression of success on the world was gained for the moment only. The drive, unfortunately for the Teutons, came just too late to have any influence on Italy, who came into the war just as the phalanxes of artillery were opening on the Russian Dunajec line. Perhaps had they waited two weeks and seen the German sweep into Galicia they might have held their hands. The moral effect on the rest of the world was passing because nothing immediate came from the campaign as far as crumbling

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Russia politically, or looking toward the capitulation of the Czar. The third hope was the destruction of the Russian Army in the field, which is always the major objective of contending armies. The Russian Army not only was not destroyed, but after the first shock it was not even demoralized and as a matter of fact hardly distressed. I know this, because I was with it. The Germans and Austrians, no doubt, would now admit if they told the truth that they failed absolutely in their hope seriously to impair the Russian Army. Whether they admit it or not, the fact remains that after two months of continuous retreating the Russians were sufficiently intact to come to a stop and bring their enemies to a dead standstill on the lines in the south, which have not varied so very much in the six months following. The Germans, however, did realize their last objective, in that they had attained a position in Galicia that left them on the southern flank of Poland in an

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alignment that enabled them to strike a new blow on Warsaw, which was ultimately a successful one. This, of course, justified the German movement. The campaign, I think, however, must have been a great disappointment, because all of its aims were not achieved and what was accomplished was at a terrible cost. It is quite impossible for me to get any accurate estimate of the German casualties. I do know, however, the Russian belief as to what it cost Germany alone to reach the final position in Galicia, and that is 380,000 casualties. Certainly every village and town in Silesia was flooded with wounded and the roads filled with trains carrying them back into Germany. The Germans throughout this movement probably had somewhere in the vicinity of sixteen corps in this campaign, and with troops sent down to fill losses probably had nearly 700,000 men engaged in the movement of two months. I cannot estimate the Austrian strength. I have read that the

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Germans claimed captures of Russians amounting to more than half a million. Inasmuch as—to the best of my information, and I have visited every one of the Russian armies engaged in the movement—the Russians never had above twenty corps, or 800,000 men, in Galicia at any one time during this movement, and, inasmuch as they eventually checked the Germans and Austrians entirely, I am inclined to put their total losses from all causes between May 1st and July 1st, which really marks the evaporation of the Galician movement as such, as not exceeding the 500,000 which I am told that the Germans claim to have taken in prisoners alone. Some Germans place the total Russian loss in Galicia during this campaign as above a million, which is probably considerably in excess of the aggregate of all the Russian soldiers that were in Galicia during these two months.

By the first of July the Russian Army was well back on its new lines of defense, and the

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Galician movement, as such, was practically finished for the time being, the centre of activity now switching to the great German drive from Southern Poland toward Warsaw.



## V

### THE JULY MOVEMENT ON WARSAW FROM THE SOUTH

WHILE the southern armies of the Austrians and Germans were pushing the Russians back into Eastern Galicia the more northerly groups were already swinging to the north with the view of breaking the Russian line that was settling down for another determined stand on what has come to be called the Chelm-Lublin line of defense. By July the Russians from Warsaw had come to form a great S. Starting from the old Bzura line, which had not been affected by the retreat, the line dipped eastward from Radom, crossing the Vistula south of Nova Alexandra, then running east in front of Lublin and Krasny-stav, then a little to the south before Grubies-

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zow, and thence south again in front of Sokal, whence it ran along approximately the old Krasne line to the head of the Ztota Lipa and then to the line of the Dneister River. After the Germans retook Rawa Ruska, where the Russians in the previous September had overwhelmingly defeated the Austrians, their progress was extremely slow, for from the Austrian frontier northward into Poland there was no railroad line and but very few good roads. During the month of July I was in every army, from that standing before Warsaw to the most eastern flank holding back the enemy in the Bukowina district. Though I do not pretend that I have accurate information as to all of these movements, I still believe that my sources of enlightenment and personal observation were sufficiently complete to justify my writing with some authority on the situation, from the point of view of the Russians at this time. The press of the Central Powers was in July rejoicing in the fact that the Austrians

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were completely rejuvenated and their morale restored to the same state that it was at the beginning of the war. What the Germans did not say, however, was that in the line facing the Russians at this time there were no less than twenty-six interjections of German formations among the Austrians, not to mention the fact that innumerable Austrian regiments and divisions were officered by Germans in Austrian uniform, while we were told that the staffs of the armies of the Dual Monarchy were stiff with Germans. As to the interjections of Germans among the Austrians I can speak with absolute authority, for one of the generals commanding an important sector of the front engaged at this period of the operations showed me his personal map on which the Austrians were marked in red and the Germans in blue, and I counted the places where the Teutons had been shoved in to stiffen up the Austrians. If the efficiency of the Galician armies was braced up, then, it is pretty clear

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that it was due not to any new spirit among them, but to the German supports. Along toward the end of June this stiffening of Germans began to be quietly removed, and from the moment the Teutons disappeared the advances stopped almost at once. In many places they could not be removed at all without the Austrians immediately collapsing, with the result that German troops which were sent as a loan to the Austrians soon became a permanent necessity to the portion of the front to which they had been sent, and have, as far as I know, never been removed from that time. In latter June and early July I was in the south, and in every army I was told that the German troops were being pulled out and sent off somewhere to the west and north. This I heard in the Ninth Army on the Dneister, in the Eleventh near Tarnopol, and again from Brussilov himself, who, with the Eighth Army, was holding the Krasne line as far north as Sokal. It was clear then that some big



Railroad lines in operation in August, 1914. Note the Teutonic superiority in rail power



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move was pending north of us, and it was the opinion of all with whom I talked that the objective would be the Third Army, which had its headquarters at Chelm and was the same army which had suffered the terrible mutilation on the Dunajec line in early May. Between this army and the Eighth was a newly formed one called the Thirteenth, which held the portion of the line between Sokal to a point almost exactly south of Chelm. A glance at a railroad map will show that for the Germans advancing via Rawa Ruska to attack the Chelm-Lublin line, meant dragging all of their guns and transports across the face of this Thirteenth Army. Roads to the west from this part of Poland were few and far between and over a country which, except on highways, was almost impassable for motor transport or heavy guns. The Germans then moved slowly on this front, because at no time during the war to that period had they operated with so many disadvantages to themselves. As soon as I



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learned the general trend of affairs I left the armies of Galicia and went directly to the scene of the impending operations. Once out of Galicia all of these armies fell under the group of the Warsaw defense which was commanded by General Alexieff. During all of the trip from Galicia (which I made in a motor car) my mind was filled with apprehension as to how this Third Army, after such terrible fighting for two months previous, could possibly withstand another drive. But after an hour's talk with the general commanding this army my fears were largely dissipated, for I discovered that the army, though it bore the same number as that of the Dunajec line, was practically a new organization throughout. The former commander, Radko Dimitrieff, the Bulgarian, had been removed, and in his place a man hitherto unknown outside his own sphere of action had been appointed. This was General Loesche, formerly a division commander of the Guards.

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The corps that had been so battered in May had been sent off to less active fronts to recuperate and refill, while other formations, taken from all over the front, had been sent down to stiffen up this line. I have often been asked how one could get any idea as to the plans of the Russians or what they really had in mind. After a year of the war one could form a fairly accurate conclusion as to what they intended as soon as one found out what troops were in certain positions. The Guards, the Caucasians, or the Siberians always mean expectation of heavy fighting and usually mean an offensive planned. On this front I found at once the Guards, two Siberian and two Caucasian corps, besides a very large number of heavy guns coming slowly into position, having been taken from all parts of the Russian front to stiffen up this line. To realize the importance of this Chelm-Lublin line it is necessary to refer to the railroad map of Poland. It will be seen that the main avenue of retreat from

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Warsaw lay approximately east, via Sedlice (then the headquarters of Alexieff) and Brest-Litowsk. A repetition of the Galician drive successfully carried out before Chelm meant that the Germans might have pushed north over a good road, and with a railroad line to assist them on Brest and with a quick push and plenty of cavalry could have reached Brest actually sooner than the garrison and defenders of Warsaw. The program was ambitious, and had it succeeded might well have resulted in the destruction and capture of three or four of the Russian armies and the absolute collapse of their whole scheme of defense. The occupation of Chelm and Lublin meant the cutting of the line from Warsaw to the Galician front, which was a serious matter, as it represented the breaking off of direct communications between the two groups, though not one that could have fatal consequences. The German plan was sound, and directed, as have been all of their plans,

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with an aim which, if successful, might have broken down the Russian resistance and given them real ground for hoping that peace might result with Russia, though personally I have never believed that the Czar could ever be forced into breaking his agreement with the Allies on the west.

While this movement was gaining headway in the south a similar program was pending in the north on the so-called Narew line. To cut this line and get through to the railroad between Petrograd and Warsaw meant the isolation of the Polish capital from the north and its enforced evacuation. Both the Narew and Chelm-Lublin movements were actually under way at once, but inasmuch as the latter really was the graver menace and dominated for a week during the middle of July, it deserves to be considered first.

## VI

### THE DRIVE ON THE CHELM-LUBLIN LINE

THE lull preceding the storm of mid-July in Southern Poland was a period of great activity behind both lines. The Germans were straining every effort to bring up their big guns and their hordes of smaller ones, while the Russian aeroplane observers reported every road from the south choked with reinforcements moving to the front. The whole line stretching from the Vistula to south of Chelm was heavily defended by the Germans, and as their artillery were ranging day by day, just as had been the case in May on the Dunajec line, it was realized by the Russians that the enemy were planning what they no doubt hoped would be a repetition of the Galician drive. But Loesche, who was now

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in command, was alive to the menace of the situation, which undoubtedly was the gravest in its possible consequences that the war had so far developed. The Grand Duke, realizing the acuteness of the danger, backed him up loyally, and by the 12th of July Loesche had everything that the General Staff could give him to help him hold his line. Seven magnificent corps, with the heaviest support of big guns that I had yet seen, plus the fact that Loesche himself was a clear-headed and courageous fighter, raised all of our spirits to a higher point than they had been since May. The idea of Loesche was that an aggressive defense was the most effective kind of defense. As far as I have been able to observe in these big artillery actions the only solution is to attack first. If one is able to make even a small advance from one's fortified line, one at least has the advantage of being out of the zone in which all of the ranges have been exactly ascertained, and hence fighting is much





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more favorable to the attackers. Loesche, feeling this, was straining every nerve to anticipate the German move, by himself launching an attack on the German centre, held by the Prussian Guards, south of Krasny-stav. It was felt by the Russians that if this front could be broken it would necessitate the retirement of the Germans across the face of the Thirteenth Army on the line of the Bug. It was hoped that this army might then advance, threatening the line of the German retreat and communications, while at the first success two cavalry corps tucked away behind Sokal were available for release on the German line of transport and supplies. The Russians had an excellent situation potentially, though, as always, their greatest handicap was shortage of munitions. It must be said, however, that in view of the gravity of the menace and the possibility of striking heavily at the enemy, other fronts had been stripped of supplies, even to the danger point, to give



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Loesche at least a fighting chance. The German centre of activity was in front of Krasny-stav, while, we were told, the flank toward the Vistula was held by the Austrians. The movement began by an attempt on the part of the Austrians to advance on Lublin from the southwest. For several days they made excellent progress, actually driving a hole through the Russian line. The flanking corps of Ewarts, who stood west and north of Loesche, however, solved this problem by making a vigorous attack on the Austrian communications, and by coöperation between both armies (Ewarts and Loesche) the Austrians came a cropper and were cut off from the main body, losing more than 20,000 prisoners, not to mention numerous casualties. These are Russian figures, but I accept them because I was at Ewarts' headquarters a few days later and saw his line of communications to the rear literally choked with mile after mile of the dusty blue-clad Austrian prisoners.

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Their state of morale at this time is evident from the remark of a certain non-commissioned officer to a Russian colonel. "It is lucky for us," he remarked, "that the fight came just when it did, for in three days we would have had a corps and a half of Germans in support and they would never have permitted us to surrender." Thus the first part of the movement was in favor of the Russians. The day for the Russian advance had actually been set. No doubt the Germans knew it as soon as we did, for their information is perfect. In any event, they attacked two days before. The blow fell on the Krasnystav front, before which stood the Third Caucasians and the Fourteenth European Corps, both of which had proved themselves many times. I had been in both these corps a few days before and had examined the front line trenches held by the Caucasians, and had up to that time never seen such elaborate or well-designed field-works in any of the theatres of operations.



The Chelm-Lublin line, July, 1915



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A maze of trenches was to serve as a refuge from the bombardment, and the front line trench itself was covered over with heavy timbers on which was piled five or six feet of dirt, all well sodded, to escape observation as far as possible.

As this corps stood across the highway leading to Krasnystav, Chelm, and to Brest-Litowsk the Germans concentrated their attention on the unfortunate Caucasians. I rarely see the German papers, but I was told that they reported that the German infantry swept the Russians out of their trenches with the bayonet. This is not true. What happened was that the Russian first line was, even as in Galicia, practically washed away by high explosive shells and its defenders annihilated. Afterward I inquired to ascertain the casualties in the trench I had visited and how it had withstood the bombardment. I learned to my astonishment that it was practically swept away by shells in two hours and that but six whole men

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emerged intact from a company of 240. This, I think, makes it reasonably clear to what extent German infantry dash was responsible for the advance on Krasnystav. As one Russian staff officer remarked to me: "The German advance on our centre was not spectacular. Simply the Prussian Guards in column of fours marching down the highway. Our defenders were mostly killed." But the Germans were dealing with a new man in Loesche, and the break in the front line did not in the least upset his equanimity. The Guards, three full divisions, were ordered up from the reserve and fell on the Germans in front of Krasnystav and drove them back. Then came another German advance which took them over Krasnystav and threw the Russians back toward Chelm. Again the Russians countered and drove the Germans back, and again the Germans massed and came on. After the first week it became clear that the German strength, with its limitless supply

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of shells, reinforcements, and munitions of all sorts, would not be denied, but it became equally clear that the driving back of Loesche was to be no advance such as the Germans had had in Galicia. Here it was a big battle and a gain of eight miles. A Russian counter-attack and a loss of five. A pause for a few days and then another German drive, and perhaps six miles gained, with again the Russian counter-attack and the Germans thrown back four. So for two weeks the line of battle was an extended zigzag, representing advances here and retreats there, but nothing decisive or sweeping anywhere, though it was clear that day by day the Germans were coming ahead. After the first week it was obvious to me that Loesche had saved the situation from its gravest menace, in that he had taken the first crash of the German advance, and though he had fallen back his army had been neither broken nor demoralized. In my motor I covered the country in the rear of the fight-



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ing lines, looking over the positions being prepared in the rear, and after a few days was absolutely confident that under the conditions which I found it would take the Germans weeks of fighting to reach Brest-Litowsk and cut the Russian line of escape from Warsaw. In all of this fighting I noticed what I have observed later in many other places, and that was the German lack of capacity to advance after they had got beyond the range of their supporting artillery. I have seen it repeatedly. A heavy German artillery action is followed by an infantry attack. The defenders being largely killed, the Germans may advance ten miles in a day. But before the artillery can be moved up the Russians deliver a counter-attack and almost invariably drive back the enemy. It was for this reason that the advance on the Chelm-Lublin line was so slow. The Germans were quick to see that their chances of sweeping the Russians before them and rushing on to Brest and their big

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decision, was lost to them, and from a bid for a colossal movement their campaign in the south settled down to a slow and stubborn day-by-day attacking operation, which was obliged to content itself with a few miles advance each week instead of the avalanche that had been planned. During this early movement I twice visited the Chelm-Lublin front and was in four different corps and at the positions in many places, and I believe, therefore, that my analysis of the action though possibly inexact in detail is correct from the general point of view. During these early days we knew that fighting was proceeding on the Narew north of Warsaw, but up to the 15th or 20th of July the major German objective was undoubtedly the Chelm-Lublin line. As soon as it became evident that a quick rush was out of the question in the south the fighting in the north suddenly assumed such violence as to bring the realization upon all that the greatest danger now lay

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in the possibility of the enemy cutting the Warsaw-Petrograd Railroad and thus forcing the evacuation of the Polish Capital. As soon as this became evident I left the south, returning via Wlodawa and Brest, for the enemy advances had already cut the railroad between Lublin and Chelm.

## VII

### FIGHTING IN THE NORTH

THE fighting in the north had up to the 15th of July been near enough the normal activities not to have aroused any undue anxiety on the part of the Russians. This line, which in a general way ran in front of Lomza, Przasnys, Ciechanow, and then south to the Vistula, where it tied up with the Bzura line forty miles in front of Warsaw, practically paralleled the line of the railroad that connected Petrograd and Warsaw. A rupture of this railroad did not necessarily mean a disaster to the Russian Army, but it did mean that the holding of Warsaw would be but the matter of days. The main line of retreat to Brest-Litowsk and Moscow would still be left open, and as long as that was not menaced

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by the collapse of Loesche's army in the south the situation in Warsaw was not hazardous. All of us who had any familiarity with the country to the north felt a good deal of confidence that nothing quick nor sweeping would come from that quarter, because the defenses were excellent and the defenders largely Siberians, who could be relied upon to hold out to the last man and to the last minute. The First Russian Army was defending this sector. I had just come back from Krasny-stav and Chelm with a greater degree of optimism than I had felt for months when news began to leak into Warsaw that heavy fighting was developing around Przasnys and Ciechanow and still farther to the north around Lomza. The general opinion of the military authorities was that this movement was intended as a containing action to prevent the shifting of Russian troops to Loesche, where the main German drive seemed to be under way. The German losses since May

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had been so heavy that it seemed improbable that they could at this time land two terrific attacks at the same moment. Besides, the Russians had been expecting daily an offensive by England and France, which if it did not actually take troops from the east would certainly prevent troops from being shifted from the western front to reinforce the Germans fighting against Russia. By the time this activity developed in the north the Russians had very largely committed to one front or another the bulk of their mobile reserves, and it did not, therefore, seem wise to endeavor to hold the advance northern line. Therefore the troops of the Czar began to fall back on the Narew line to enable them to hold a shorter front without reinforcing, which would have been necessary were the advanced lines to be held. At least this was the version given by the Russians. While these movements were under way I was mostly in the south and cannot deny from my own information the German

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claims of having swept the Russians out of their advance positions. A Russian colonel who came from the positions immediately after the withdrawal assured me that the Russians knew when the Germans planned the attack and left early in the night, fooling the Germans into firing 80,000 shells at the abandoned trenches before they realized that the main Russian force was already well back on to the new positions in the rear. The news of this retreat threw Warsaw, always nervous and jumpy, into a panic of alarm, and for the hundredth time since I had followed the fortunes of that fair city I heard on every hand that Warsaw was at last to be evacuated. It is difficult for me to place dates exactly, but as near as I can learn the retreat to the Narew was about the 17th, and on the same day the Russians began to fall back on the so-called Blonie line, which was the last important defense before Warsaw itself. This line of trenches was begun in the previous Novem-



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ber or December, when the second German invasion of Poland was gaining alarming headway. The line extended roughly from the fortress of Novogeorgievsk almost due south to Blonie and Grodzisk and then southeast to the Vistula at Gorakalwarja, forming a half-circle surrounding Warsaw. This line was the best planned and laid out of any the Russians then had. At Blonie, where I had the opportunity of examining it more in detail, it consisted of six lines of trenches with forests of barbed wire. Artillery positions had been constructed months before, and everything within the field of fire had been cut down. The front trenches were beautifully covered over and the country before them was so flat that one could see without a break as far as a field gun could throw a shell. Personally, then, I was not greatly alarmed when it became known that the Bzura line had been abandoned and the whole line south of Gorakalwarja had been pulled back to the line of the Vistula with

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the exceptions of a few strips around the bridge heads at Nowa Alexandra, Ivangrod, and other points. It was clear that the Russians proposed to use their strength to the very best of their ability and make every unit as productive as possible, which meant holding on only to the places that were indispensable from strategic reasons. The world at large always believed that the Germans were going up against numbers of Russians far in excess of their own. I am not at liberty to disclose what exact numbers the Russians had at this time, but I can state that the effective strength of the Czar's army in the fighting line from the Bukowina to the Baltic was not greatly in excess of the Germans alone on the eastern front. I do feel at liberty to state that I knew of one sector in the line where a cavalry corps supported by but four heavy guns and meagre field artillery was holding a front of more than forty miles. It is true that the Russians had plenty of men in uniform and in

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training, but without rifles or munitions this superiority did them no good. I think it safe to say that never from May until the end of the Warsaw movements did the Russians have, including garrisons and reserves, in excess of 1,500,000 effective troops, a large portion of which were not of course available in these operations. To the best of my advices the Germans had in these operations well up to if not more than a million in their fighting line, not to speak of the cohorts of their Austro-Hungarian Allies in Galicia. It will be readily seen, then, that the Russians had no troops to spare about Warsaw or anywhere else, and why it was necessary to shorten the lines to make the limited number of troops hold the most important places. Blonie is but seventeen miles from Warsaw, and when it became known that the army was coming back onto this position the population of the city was in despair, which even I felt had some foundation when on the evening of the 17th of July the civil

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evacuation of Warsaw was announced for the following Monday. Then began in Warsaw that period of packing up and moving out which I had already seen on a widespread scale in Galicia. Peasants that had been living between the Bzura and the Blonie lines came pouring through the town, and night and day the lines of carts bearing the household treasures of the peasantry creaked and groaned through the main streets of the town on their way eastward. At once began the operations of mining all of the bridges over the Vistula and the throwing up of fieldworks across the river at Praga. From the roof of the hotel was visible the clouds of smoke rolling up from the west where the Russians were burning the country ahead of the German advance. Meantime the Russians were painstakingly collecting what copper was available in the town and sending it back across the river. Bells, machinery, and tools containing copper were seen all day by the vanload as they dragged

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out over the Vistula bridges. Up to this time, however, the military situation before Warsaw itself was not acute. The defense which was being made by the Second Army had for its use four corps. The Fifth Siberian stood nearest the Vistula. Directly in front of Warsaw was the Sixth European, and next that lay the Thirty-fifth Reserve Corps, a new formation which we had gotten in May, and on the southern flank stood the Thirty-sixth Reserve Corps with its wing resting on the Vistula. Some extra troops were holding the bank of the Vistula toward a point to the south where the northerly flank of Ewarts took up the responsibility of keeping back the Germans. All of this time fighting of varying intensity was going on north of Warsaw, and increasing German concentrations around Makow were reported, and the evidence indicated that a real drive was developing on this sector. In regard to the movements in the north from July 20th to the 23d I speak with some hesita-

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tion and reserve, as my own time was devoted for those days to the situation in the south and on the immediate front of Warsaw itself. From July 24th until the fall of Warsaw I was entirely on this front and can therefore write the balance of the story to that time with more certainty than the movements mentioned in the preceding paragraphs.

## VIII

### THE DRIVE ON THE NAREW LINE

BY THE 22d of July it was reasonably clear that the German movements in the north were no mere demonstration, but a violent assault to break through the Russian line in strength and cut the railroad to Petrograd. The belief by the Russians that the major German effort would fall in the south had resulted, as I have shown, in the sending of picked corps from all other fronts to the Chelm-Lublin line. Three of the best corps that had heretofore been used in the Warsaw defense were fighting in Southern Poland, and when the unexpectedly heavy blow fell on the Narew the Russians were not in condition to put up as strong a resistance as Loesche was offering in the south. Not only was it difficult



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to find new men to throw into the firing line, but out of the meagre reserves of ammunition then available the bulk was going to the southern front, where the menace seemed to be the greatest. It is very difficult to estimate the exact numbers engaged, but to the best of my information—and my sources were excellent—the Germans were able to concentrate on the Narew sector (with their centre of attack on Pultusk) somewhere in the neighborhood of 131 active battalions, and thirteen or fourteen reserve battalions, giving them an effective infantry force of not much less than 150,000, not to mention their artillery and other arms. Against this force the Russians were able to concentrate at the threatened point probably less than two-thirds of that number of infantry, and not more than a third to a half of the amount of artillery, and probably had not more than a fifth of the quantity of munitions even at the beginning of the operations, and this ultimately ran down to approximately

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a tenth, or even less, for some of the batteries ran out of shells entirely. The heaviest attack fell on Pultusk itself, where I was informed the enemy effected a concentration of fire from 150 guns on a front of a few miles in length. This narrow strip was held by a certain Siberian corps which had fallen back a few days before from Makow, where it had held back for several days three times its numbers of Germans. The same situation developed as I have chronicled on the Krasnystav front. The Russians were not turned out of their trenches in disorder by the German bayonets. They remained at their posts and for the most part were blown into atoms by the German high explosive shells that were rained upon them. In this way the enemy broke down a line of perhaps five miles and managed to cross the Narew line and to establish themselves on the eastern bank with a force that the Russians estimated to aggregate nearly ten divisions. The cross-

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ing of the Narew probably took place about the 24th of July, though I am not absolutely certain of the date. With the Russian line broken in its most important point there began what might be called a giving back of the Russians both north and south of the sector that had been caved in by German artillery superiority. The Teutons were not slow to follow up their success on the Narew, and with their new base on Pultusk struck southeast toward the little town of Wyszkwow with the hope of cutting the branch railroad at that point, which was the avenue of communications of the First Army. From there it was but seventeen miles to the main line of railroad from Petrograd to Warsaw. With their first impetuous rush the Germans, supported by their heavy artillery, forced the Russians back to within four miles of Wyszkwow. So near were they, in fact, that they could see the trains on the railroad that were feeding the Russian front and taking back the

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wounded. But, as has so often been the case in this war on the eastern front, the German advance far outstripped the movements forward of their own artillery.

The Russians were licked hurriedly into shape and delivered a counter-attack with such violence that the Germans were thrown back nearly ten miles of their hard-won ground, losing terribly in casualties and more than 1,000 in prisoners taken by the impetuosity of the peasant soldiers of the Czar. By this time the Russians had begun to readjust themselves, and reserves snatched from here and there along less pressing fronts to the north were thrown in from day to day as fast as they arrived, and by, say, the 28th to the 29th the gravest crisis on this front had passed, for, even as Loesche had done in front of Krasnystav, Litvinov (commanding the First Army) had done in the north. That is, he had accepted the first great crash, and though he had bent beneath it and been forced back at

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first, he had regained a portion of the lost ground and had broken down the momentum of the German assault which hereafter was obliged to be content with a few miles gained each day. It was clear, then, that the movements in the north were not going to be sufficiently rapid to enable the Germans to advance suddenly on the Petrograd line and by cutting the same, menace the immediate communications with Warsaw.

During these days I spent the bulk of my time between Warsaw and the First Army headquarters, where I was kept roughly informed of the developments by the staff of the general commanding. During this time I was back of the lines most of the time, though with corps at the front several times during the action. Everything was chaotic and uncertain, and for three days it was impossible to estimate whether or not the Germans would be able to drive through on to the main railroad line and bring about the disaster that they were hoping



Closing in on Warsaw, July 28, 1915





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for. The acuteness of the situation was aggravated by the shortage of ammunition, which became more and more apparent with each day that the fighting continued. What we saw daily on the roads behind the line was dramatic to a degree. I knew from information that I had received at the staff of the general commanding the whole front that there was some ammunition on the way—not a lot, to be sure, but enough to give the First Army at least a fighting chance to hold its own.

During the fighting around Wyszkw the situation was at its worst. The German guns were pounding away with a continuity that made it impossible to distinguish any separate report. What came to our ears was like the constant rolling of thunder. To answer this fusillade the Russian guns had at no time much and often nothing at all. At the railhead behind the lines caissons were waiting for trains to arrive from Moscow with shrapnel and small-arm ammunition, and the moment that

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an engine and its string of trucks pulled in a hundred eager hands fell on the carloads of shrapnel shells and transferred them to the caissons and limbers. Again and again in these dreary days I have seen the caissons fifteen and twenty miles from the rear going toward the front at a gallop. One could recognize them a mile away by the clouds of dust that rose above the road. With six horses to a team, each lathered with sweat and with nostrils literally dripping blood from their exertions, they would come past at a gallop, the drivers laying on the whips and the limbers bumping and clanking over the rough roads with a metallic jingle. It was a question often of minutes as to whether or not the munitions would arrive. From miles in the rear one could tell exactly when the caissons reached the front, for then would begin instantly the drumming of our own guns taking up the burden of their work once more.

It is impossible to estimate what this un-

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equal fight cost the Russians, but it certainly was not little, for the roads each day were filled with wounded coming to the rear. One often hears the statement made that the Russian soldiers have small interest in their cause, but if one of the doubters could have been with me these exciting days and seen and talked with the returning wounded as I have done he would have thought otherwise. "We must hold the line," was the word on every man's lips, often so faint from weakness that one could barely hear it. By the 29th or 30th the gravity of the crisis was passed, for a slight increase of munitions and the arrival of some reserves made it clear that any future advances of the Germans would be on the instalment plan, and that Warsaw itself was not for the moment in immediate danger. The credit of this stubborn resistance, which it seems to me the Germans must recognize and admit, was due purely to the character of the Russian peasant soldier. Short of



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men, short of munitions, outnumbered in every particular, they still managed to hold on until the impetus of the Germans was broken and once again the chance of inflicting a calamity had slipped from Teuton hands.

## IX

### THE ANGUISH OF WARSAW

AUGUST 1, 1915, marked the termination of a year in which, with the exception of a few months, the fate of Warsaw was never really out of the balance. To one who spent the larger portion of this eventful year never far from the threatened city it seems as though the ebb and flow of the fortunes of war around the capital of Poland presents one of the most dramatic pages in the world's history. From the day that the Germans declared war on Russia there began the uncertainty as to the destiny of the greatest of Polish cities, which was never entirely lifted from the hearts of the Poles. As all the world knows now, the Russians at the beginning of the war did not anticipate the holding of Warsaw at all, for it was be-

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lieved that the sentiment of the population of Poland would be such as to make it inadvisable for the Czar to try and defend the country against what it was believed would be a German avalanche across the frontier.

But contrary to the opinion of most, even of the Poles themselves, the psychology of the population crystallized almost over night against the Teutons and overwhelmingly in favor of the Czar. But in the early stages of the war no important attempt had been planned to stay the tide of the German advance, with the result that by October 1st the enemy was sweeping triumphantly over the Polish plain, while each day the hearts of the inhabitants sank lower as the news of German Uhlans everywhere west of Warsaw sifted into the town. By the middle of the month the enemy, with five or six corps against a mere handful of Russians, was so near that the sound of the guns echoed through the streets of Warsaw itself.

Then came those dramatic days when the

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battle raged without the town itself and the windows of the houses shook with the detonation of artillery, while the streets were filled with the wounded pouring back from the line of battle. Came then that extraordinary moment when the Russian defense was practically over and there was not a soul in Warsaw that dared hope for the salvation of the city. For five hours on this critical day there was on one front not a single organized unit or a battery of artillery between the menaced city and the Teuton hordes. The prize which was still to cost them a million casualties lay within their very grasp, yet they knew it not. For some extraordinary reason which is yet to be explained the Germans, usually so well informed, hesitated, and the vacillation of a few hours cost them the greatest prize of the war, which slipped from their hands not to be regained for another dreary ten months of effort and sacrifice. Even as the Germans tarried came the news that the Grand Duke had said: "War-



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saw is to be held at any costs." In an hour the news was on every tongue and hope flashed once more on every face. Shattered organizations were licked into shape, and by nightfall the resistance abandoned at noon was taken up again. The next day the columns of relief began to arrive. Surely no more dramatic sight has ever been witnessed in history than the arrival of Plevie's army. Coming in solid trains at express schedule, the grimy Siberians who had been fighting for weeks in Poland and Galicia and had been snatched out of the fighting line on the San for this emergency arrived at Praga (across the river from Warsaw), and, leaping from their box cars, they moved across the old steel bridge of the Vistula and swung down the Jerasalumskaia with their bands playing and banners flying, while their artillery crossed the new bridge a mile farther up the stream at a gallop, caissons groaning with full loads of shrapnel shell.

Could anything be more dramatic than these

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unshaven, dirty warriors pouring through the town, with the Polish population stripping the flower shops to throw blossoms in their pathway and deck these stained and worn veterans with garlands? By nightfall they were in the fighting line, and the thunder that shook the streets was from Russian guns and not from German. For three days the Russian troops poured through the town. The crisis was passed and the German invasion for the moment stayed. From October 20th until middle November Warsaw breathed easy, for it was believed that the German menace was gone for good. Then began the second great invasion of Poland, this time by a huge army, and from that day to the 5th of August no man could say what would be the fate of Warsaw.

By December 15th the Germans were hammering at the Bzura line, later to become famous in the war. On the 18th the German press announced a great victory west of Warsaw and school children were given a holiday

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to celebrate what was announced would be in history—a day that would go down in the records with such names as Salamis, Leipzig, and Waterloo. Again in Warsaw was the frantic apprehension of uncertainty. “The Germans will be here any day,” we who were again in Warsaw in this crisis were told by the population. But again came reinforcements, and again the German hopes were blasted and their armies hurled back over the Bzura for the long months of trench warfare that lay before them.

In latter January came the fearful attacks on the Bolimov positions, where we were told the Germans concentrated 600 guns and ten divisions on a front of a few miles. Again Warsaw heard the roar of guns and again the streets were filled with wounded pouring back to the hospitals. Again came reinforcements, and this crisis, too, was passed. But even as Warsaw sighed with relief came the news of a great German movement in East Prussia, followed by a still more acute menace

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from the German frontier at Mlawá. For the third or fourth time trains from Petrograd were discontinued, and the meek in heart again took refuge in flight, and for a few days hope once more faded as reports of the German advance on Przasnys came in from the north. Then came a few tense days. Once more the Grand Duke searched his front for reinforcements, and once again the Germans were checked, and this time thrown back clear to their own frontier, leaving countless dead and 15,000 prisoners in the Russian hands. Thus with the coming of spring hope blossomed anew in Warsaw, and even the most pessimistic began to believe that the German advance was finally checked. Thus passed the month of April, and then came the German avalanche in Galicia with the steady advances which took the Austro-German armies well west of Warsaw and on their southern flank. With the first attacks on Loesche and the threat on Brest-Litowsk the hearts of the Poles sank.

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Then came the news of the stubborn defense there and the approximate check given to the Germans. For two days Warsaw smiled, when news from the north brought gloom to every face. The crossing of the Narew and the advance on Wyszkwow was responsible for the evacuation. The sight of the post-office closing up and machines being dismantled for the copper in the machinery produced a profound gloom which silenced even the most optimistic ones in the city. With the approach of the enemy, aeroplanes again dotted the sky above Warsaw, and hardly a day passed that bombs were not dropped on Warsaw killing or wounding civilians, men, women, and children. I have never been able to understand the wantonness of this proceeding, because I have never seen bombs cause anything but curiosity in Warsaw. In all the air raids that I have known of or seen, not one ever caused even the semblance of a panic in the city.

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While the fight was raging on the Narew the evacuation continued apace. The wounded were trundled out of the hospitals and sent eastward on the trains, while for the first time one saw the roads behind Warsaw crowded with divisional transport going to the rear. Field hospitals that had been before Warsaw now began to drift back, and the Red Cross trains that formerly had their headquarters west of Warsaw now spent the nights east of the river. Personally I have never been a pessimist, but by the 31st of July I was coming to that state of mind which could not be described as optimistic. Then came another change in sentiment. It was known that the Russians had checked the enemy at Wyszkow and thrown them back ten miles. At once the Przasnys campaign in March was recalled when the Germans had been thrown back in the full tide of their advance, and once again one heard people saying that the crisis was passed and that Warsaw would yet



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weather the storm. In the meantime the roar of guns from the south, which had been echoing through the streets, began to die away, and it was known that a German advance on the Thirty-sixth Corps south of the city had been hurled back with heavy losses. Similar feelers on the Blonie line were known to have come to abrupt and untimely ends for the Germans. Warsaw picked up hope again—a hope that soared when it became known that sanitary trains that had been sent away were coming back, and the flow of transport going east had ceased and some of it had actually started back. “Besides,” one was told, “the staff of the Second Army is still in town.” Personally I believed that the gravest danger was passed, for it seemed incredible that the Germans could keep developing reinforcements in sufficient volume to keep up the fury of their attacks much longer. Thus for the last time hope reigned in Warsaw on July 30, 1915.



## X

### THE LAST STRAW

BY JULY 26th the Germans by their furious attacks north and south had gradually drawn against themselves or the Austrians, in one quarter or another of the extended front, practically everything that the Russians had available. During this same time pressure was being exerted in the Baltic provinces, with varying degrees of intensity, no doubt with the intention of preventing shifting of troops from one point of the Russian front to another. I shall not dwell on the campaign in the north at this time, because I was not there then and my observations would have no more value than anybody else's opinion on the same subject. Up to this time I had been based on Warsaw, and all of my impedi-

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menta were at the Bristol Hotel. By the 26th I felt moderately sure that neither the Narew line nor the Chelm-Lublin front could be broken sufficiently abruptly to make the danger on Warsaw immediate. I was at this time travelling in the company of Lieut. Sherman Miles, the American military attaché, and I may say in passing the most competent one I have ever known. We were both well posted on the Russian position and agreed as to the failure of the Germans in their major objectives. For the moment the situation then was good. I have often found the best way to estimate the German plans is to ask one's self what one would do if one were the Germans and knew what the Russians knew about themselves. This is what we did on July 26th. We knew that the Russians to strengthen themselves north and south had weakened their line south of Warsaw along the Vistula. This they did because the Vistula was, with its high eastern banks, easy to

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defend and required the smallest number of men to hold it. A glance at the map will show that a crossing of the Vistula south of Warsaw would enable the Germans, if they had plenty of cavalry, to reach the important junction of Novaminsk in a stiff day's march, as it was actually a shorter distance from the Vistula to this point than from Novaminsk to Warsaw. I therefore moved my base to Novaminsk itself, which with its intersection of highways gave an excellent chance to get about in a motor in the shortest possible time.

On July 27th-28th the Germans crossed the Vistula near the mouth of the Radomka River, or within ten miles of the point we had estimated two days before as being the weakest in the Russian defenses.

From now on things moved rapidly. The first crossing probably did not include more than a division and a half of the enemy, and this was checked by troops hurried up from Ewarts' Army. There was a flurry at head-

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quarters, for it was clear to all that the Germans had found the Russian heel of Achilles. Yet with the enemy fighting fiercely and losing heavily north and south in their important operations on the Narew and Chelm-Lublin line it did not seem possible that any movement which could be developed on a third front could command sufficient backing in new troops to be more than a reconnaissance. On the 28th the headway gained was checked, and reports of this result in the fighting found answer in the Warsaw optimism of the 30th. Then came news that another German corps had arrived and was preparing to cross the river at about the same point. It was at once clear that the advance of these corps on Novaminsk would wreck the whole defense of Warsaw. The answer of Alexieff, who was in supreme command on this front, was to extend the line of the Warsaw defense, making three corps do the work previously assigned to four, and the fourth, which was the Thirty-

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sixth Reserve Corps, by the process of extension of front was squeezed over the river at Gorakalwarja and effected the double purpose of getting out of the Warsaw salient itself; but at the same time it came in between the advancing Germans and the line of the Russian retreat from Warsaw. Conditions were alarming when this corps came over, but within twenty-four hours it had administered a serious slap to the enemy and driven them back toward the river in some places, while in practically every place it was holding its own. But now again was felt the pinch of want of ammunition, but notwithstanding the meagre diet of the guns the battle was going decidedly in favor of the army of the Czar.

On Monday, August 2d, I motored from Novaminsk to the staff of Alexieff to get some gasoline and tires, and there learned that the optimism, for which I have been severely criticised ever since, was up to this time felt by the General Staff. General Goulevitch,

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chief-of-staff of Alexieff, with whom I talked this Monday morning as we stood out in the sunshine in front of his headquarters told me, and I quote his exact words: "Had you come to me before two o'clock this morning I should have told you that we felt almost sure of saving Warsaw."

What had happened to break this optimism was this: The Germans had suddenly developed two additional corps not taken from any other point on the Russian front and these were already crossing the Vistula about east of Garwolin, a little city on the road between Warsaw and Lublin. This made four enemy corps against not above a corps and a brigade or two of Russians to hold them back. Besides these new enemy formations it was learned that three Austrian divisions, said to be coming from the Serbian theatre of operations, were on their way to this same offensive. This meant, then, that with the enemy forces already on the ground and



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with those due to arrive shortly the Germans would have approximately five and a half corps against a shade over one Russian unit to defend this spot in the line. It was clear, then, from this moment that Warsaw was lost, but the realization of this fact brought neither panic nor excitement. The Russian commander knew his troops and his army and made his plans quietly and without excitement. Before Warsaw there now stood three corps only. It was clear that to weaken that front meant the certainty of a break in the Blonie line, and it was equally obvious that unless the corps south of Warsaw was supported promptly it would be driven back and the line from Warsaw to the rear menaced by the enemy.

Every one in Warsaw who for months had been speculating as to how the huge army standing before the city would get out in case of the giving up of Warsaw had always imagined that the main body of the army would pass through the city. We had pic-



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tured scenes of confusion, with bridges overloaded and chaos and panic everywhere. Nothing of this ever happened at all. Pontoon bridges had already been thrown across the river in many points both north and south of Warsaw, and very little ever passed through the town at all. When it became clear that the crossing of the Vistula was in reality the last straw to the defense, the front was again extended, permitting the Thirty-fifth Corps to slide out over the river, and by joining the Thirty-sixth already there interpose an obstacle to further German advances. The Fifth Siberian Corps, which had been holding the northern end of the line next the Vistula near Novogeorgievsk, never came to Warsaw at all, but slipped over the river near that point, effecting a movement analogous to that being performed by the corps in the south; that is, it extricated itself from Warsaw and at the same time came into the line defending the Narew and by so doing

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definitely checked any further sudden advance which the Germans might have developed there as a by-product of the confusion of the moment which they undoubtedly hoped and planned for but which actually never came to pass at all. The last remaining corps then, which was the Sixth European Corps, was left spread out like a fan in front of Warsaw. It is difficult to trace the exact movements of this corps; some of it crossed on pontoons south of the town, and it is probable that the bulk of it was either in the outskirts of Warsaw or actually crossing the river by six that night. The last formations which had been holding the rear guard outside of Warsaw marched quietly through the town between ten and midnight without much excitement or chaos as far as I have been able to learn. By 1:30 Warsaw was evacuated by practically the entire army save possibly a meagre rear guard. At a little before three the last automobile attached to the staff of the

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Second Army, which had left two or three days before, motored out over the Vistula bridge, and at three in the morning the bridges were blown up. At 6:00 A. M. the first German troops arrived on the banks of the Vistula. Thus did the Russians give up the Polish Capital after just one year of the war.

## XI

### THE FALL OF WARSAW

IN THIS modest series of the operations on the eastern front I have not intruded personal experiences except in such degree as to indicate my sources of information at various times. At this stage in the war descriptive matter is largely stale, as the world is long since satiated with accounts of the atmosphere of war. I have already described within my capacity the military movements leading up to the evacuation, but to understand the situation at this time and after it does seem worth while to give a little picture of the army and of Warsaw on the last day it remained in Russian hands. I had spent the night of August 2d in the Bristol Hotel, but the constant alarms and announcements that the

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bridges were about to be blown up had not been conducive of either rest or serenity. I have never known a place where rumors based on nothing spread with such thoroughness in so short a time. The last night I slept in the Bristol just as I was getting into bed about 2:00 in the morning two excited Poles burst in to inform me that the bridges were to be blown up in two hours and that all rail communication had been cut that afternoon. I did not believe it, and after turning them out went to bed. I was awakened at 6:00 by a friend in his pajamas who broke into the room with the inspiring information that the bridges were being blown up. As my motor was the only means of transportation on which we could depend to keep us out of the clutches of the enemy, and as it was standing in a garage on the Warsaw side of the Vistula, I felt that I must get up. The alarm, however, was premature, for the noise was not the blowing up of the bridges at all, but only a

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couple of "early-bird" German taubes out dropping a little morning hate on Warsaw in the shape of bombs which were bursting about town while the sky was filled with the smoke from Russian shrapnel breaking above us in the blue. Thus I finally left Warsaw as a sleeping base because, though war is enlivening, it is still necessary to get some rest. We had been living in a palace at Novaminsk and so decided to sleep there in the future, but failed in this anticipation because the staff of the Second Army, which left the same day, took over our palace and left us only a room in a small house.

It was on the same day that we learned from the staff that the game was up as far as Warsaw was concerned. Even if one had not been told verbally, the roads needed no interpretation. Mile after mile in unbroken column, plodding through the dust that rose above the road in clouds, was the endless column of caissons, transport carts, field

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kitchens, and the thousand and other odds and ends that belong to an army. But in this retreat, as in the many, many others that I have accompanied or rather preceded in Russia, there was nothing in the faces of the men to indicate whether they were retiring or advancing.

Wednesday, August 4th, Warsaw's last day, we left early in my motor and ran down to the position where the Thirty-sixth Corps, now reinforced by the Thirty-fifth, was standing between the Germans and the line of retreat. It was a perfectly still day, with hardly a cloud in the sky. Save for the dull booming of the guns over on the river there was absolute peace everywhere. During the morning there was scarcely any movement on the Lublin-Warsaw Road, which was the line of communication of the Thirty-fifth and Thirty-sixth Corps. The world outside that was waiting eagerly for news from Warsaw no doubt imagined scenes of chaos and confusion. Every mile or two on the road one



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met a few belated refugees plodding quietly along, but otherwise there was nothing to indicate that the last great drama of Warsaw was being enacted under our very noses. By noon there was more sign of life, for guns began to come back from the front, each marred and soiled by hard usage with the accompanying caissons, alas, now quite empty. Battery after battery I passed on the road—coming back at a time when each was worth its weight in gold. Why? No shells. The Germans say the lack of shells was exaggerated by the Russians as an excuse for defeat. The Germans are mistaken in thinking this. I am sure of this, because I was there and saw it myself. We lunched that day with the general commanding the Thirty-sixth Corps. Not far away the boom of guns and occasional roll of rifle and machine-gun fire told the story. Yet the war was hardly mentioned at all by any of us during the lunch. From this one can gather some idea as to the amount

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of confusion that prevailed. The general had suggested that we go forward toward the positions that afternoon, and horses were actually saddled and in readiness for the trip when some intuition resolved us to alter our program and return to Warsaw, for something told me that the end was nearer than the scenes of quiet on the Lublin-Warsaw Road indicated. So we left at once and started back for the town. But now the scene was quite changed from that we had witnessed in the morning: the evacuation was well under way and everywhere one met the troops that were coming over the river. At one point in the road I stopped the motor to talk with the soldiers of the Thirty-fifth Corps, the last unit of which had just crossed the river that morning and had been badly dusted. The colonel of the regiment was sitting on his horse in the middle of a field with notebook in hand checking up his losses. The soldiers of his command were lying along the

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grassy bank by the roadside, many of them falling asleep the moment they sat down. A field kitchen was halted in the road and the few soldiers that were not asleep were lining up to get what was perhaps their first ration since the night before. Many were in bloody bandages and all worn and haggard. "Here," I thought, "one will find the morale of the Russians at its lowest ebb. These men have been fighting for days and have lost." So I called up a great strapping private soldier. Wearily he got to his feet and came over to the side of the motor. His face was gray with fatigue and his eyes glassy for want of rest. "How do you feel now about the war?" I asked him. "Do you want peace?" He looked at me in a dazed kind of way and replied as he shuffled his feet uneasily: "We are all very tired." "But still, what do you want to do about the war?" I persisted. The Russians are not quick to reply to questions under any circumstances. For a long time the tired

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soldier looked at me and then for the second time he said: "I am very tired. We are all very tired." "Well, then," I said, "do you want to make peace and leave the Germans in possession of Warsaw?" For a long time he stood in the hot afternoon sun looking at the dust in the road and then replied: "I am very tired. So are we all. The Germans are taking Warsaw to-day. This is not as it should be. I think I am a better soldier than the German. With rifles and shells we can always beat him. It is not right that we should give up Warsaw." He paused for a moment and then looked up with his eyes flashing as he finished in one quick burst: "Never! I am tired, but I want to go back and fight some more. We cannot leave the Germans in Warsaw."

I cannot, of course, speak for the psychology of the Russians who fell into the hands of the enemy this day and later. Naturally I had no chance to talk to them. Of the ones that

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I did see and talk with, this man I have quoted was a type. When we turned into the main road from Sedlice to Warsaw the evacuation was under full head. I suppose that during the entire retreat, this afternoon was the nearest to confusion; how little this was, I think, is made clear from the fact that though I was going back to town and the tide was flowing the other way there was never such density as to stop my motor or cause me to reduce speed under fifteen miles an hour. This, then, was the "rout" of the Russians at its high tide! It was after six when we came over the hills and looked down on Warsaw that so many, many times before had greeted us from the returns of scores of trips. But now a glance showed that the city, which we who had followed its destinies for a year had come to love, was doomed. At the end of the beautiful new bridge hung one of our observation balloons, while a couple of miles up the river the big German shells

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were bursting with terrific detonations, literally spurting buildings into the air. Our own batteries down to their last shots replied only occasionally, or, as in many places, not at all. Warsaw was passing from us and passing rapidly, and as I stood on the new bridge watching the bursting shells through my glasses my mind ran back over the past eight months. I thought of the tens of thousands of our heroic troops that lay buried on the Bzura line. I recalled the sacrifices of the Siberians in October to save the war. And as it all passed through my mind my heart grew heavy. It was as though something near and dear to me were dying before my eyes. But the German shells were moving slowly nearer. Evidently some of their batteries were being advanced. One of those big ten-inch shells on the highway and we might not get our car out. It was no time for sentiment. The bridges were mined and guards stood around the electric connections. I dared



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not take the car into town lest a premature explosion leave us stranded with it on the west side. So Sherman Miles and I went over the bridge on foot and took a cab to the old Bristol Hotel, where we had been living for months. It was utterly deserted but for the staff of the hotel. All guests, we were told, had been cleared out early in the afternoon by the orders of the military. The employees of the hotel, mostly Poles, stood about like mourners at a funeral. The great lobby which we had known of yore filled with officers and well-dressed women was silent and empty but for the reverberation of the German-made thunder that sounded ever on our ears. We went up on the roof and took the last look. In the west columns of smoke were rolling up. The traffic in the street was about as usual, though there was a peculiar depression everywhere. After snatching a few sandwiches we left the hotel and drove to the end of the new bridge. This was literally the eleventh



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hour in Warsaw yet there was less of a crush on the bridge in this moment than there had been ten days before, when the civil government had left. While we were crossing the bridge four bombs were dropped from aeroplanes. Many of the taubes were speeding about in the gray dome of the early evening, and hardly a minute passed that a high explosive dropped from above did not shake the windows with its report. A taube flew over the bridge as we crossed and dropped a bomb which fortunately fell in Praga and not on us. Russian batteries outside the town were pouring shrapnel up into the sky. I saw one German aeroplane skim out of a cloud of fleecy white smoke wherein I counted the bursts of fourteen Russian shrapnel at the same time. At the end of the bridge I found my motor. My chauffeur's sister-in-law, so he told me, had had her arm blown off at the shoulder by a bomb dropped from an aeroplane the night before. She died shortly

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after. A bomb which fell at the intersection of two of the main streets killed or wounded twenty-five civilians. Thus did the flyers make merry over the city which within forty-eight hours was to be theirs. Why do they do it? I have never heard any adequate explanation. As it began to grow dark we moved eastward, and as the grays of twilight began to fade I stood on the hill at Verstop 13 (mile 7) on the Moscow Road and watched the quick zigzag bursts of the German shrapnel now breaking on the outskirts of the town. In the road plodded the long line of transport now mingled with infantry. Tired and disappointed, no doubt, but never demoralized. As darkness came on we turned eastward and saw the crest of the hill shut out from our sight the golden dome of the Greek church in Warsaw. A few hours later the bridges were blown up and Warsaw was no longer Russian.

## XII

### WARSAW, THE GERMAN ZENITH

THE blowing up of the Vistula bridges marked the end of a distinct phase in the war, a phase which I believe history will ultimately judge as the zenith of the German strength in this war, for viewed from a wider perspective the movements of the Teutons from that time, regardless of changes of lines on the map, have been a good deal of an anti-climax, but of this I will treat later on. When Warsaw fell I had been with the Russian armies for exactly ten months, and I trust that my friendliness and growing affection for the Russians was not such as to blind me to the merits and virtues of the enemy during this period. Obviously my sympathies were with the Allies, otherwise I should not have gone with

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the Russians at all but with the Central Powers, with whom at the beginning of the war it was much easier to make a connection than with the armies of the Grand Duke Nicholas. My own opinion at the fall of Warsaw was that it was the wind up of one of the most remarkable campaigns in history. From May until August 5th, or for approximately three unbroken months, the Germans, with a fortitude and capacity for sacrifice which has not been exceeded in history, had been conducting what was practically a continuous battle. The endurance and bravery of their troops is not to be questioned, and up to that time I had never seen a sign of depression or weakening in morale among the German prisoners with whom I talked on every occasion possible. I have seen them on practically every Russian front during this campaign (save East Prussia), and though I was never in sympathy with their campaign I never failed in admiration of their spirit and independence even as prisoners.

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I remember in Tarnopol seeing two hundred captured the day before. These men had arrived from France at noon the preceding day and were prisoners at 3:00 in the afternoon. All were worn and haggard, several without shirts and many without helmets or caps. I have never seen men in a worse state of physical exhaustion, yet they marched through town with eyes to the front and a pride of themselves and an independence which could not have been surpassed even by troops returning from a victorious field of battle.

The blow which fell in Galicia was apparently perfectly planned from every point of view, and backed by the superb German railroad systems, there never was a falter in three months for the want of either men or ammunition. As far as one on the Russian side could see there was never a mistake in strategy or a serious "bull" in tactics. Everything had been foreseen and planned save one item, and that the capacity of the Russians to

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

absorb defeat and pull themselves together. This I think the Germans never foresaw and have despaired of from the middle of May until the present time with a constantly increasing exasperation and annoyance. As one German said after the Galician drive: "It is hopeless fighting against men who do not play the game and admit their defeat. The Russians were utterly beaten on the Dunajec, and any people but fools would have recognized it, but instead of accepting their defeat like men they apparently ignore it and in two weeks have apparently forgotten the German superiority and are ready to fight all over again." From talks with innumerable prisoners there is no question in my mind that every German soldier believed from May 1st that the capture of Warsaw represented peace with Russia. Warsaw had come to represent the prize of the campaign, and from the German point of view its capture must represent to Russia the final failure of her armies. The rest of the war



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would be relatively simple: an independent peace with Russia, with trade agreements which would mean limitless resources to draw on for the war with France, against whom the entire strength in the east could be sent and Paris taken in a month. Then the long and slow preparation which every German hoped would mean the annihilation of England. From this point of view the outcome of the World War looked bright indeed to the troops who at last heard that the great prize was within their grasp. It seems, therefore, that while one cannot minimize the triumph of the Germans in actually taking Warsaw after so many months, one can but condemn the Germans for their failure to know beforehand that the capture of the city for which they made such endless sacrifices did not spell peace at all but only what has proven to be the beginning of what is in reality an entirely new war against Russia under conditions which have been increasingly disad-



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vantageous to the Germans and improving from the point of view of the Russians. The armies of the Warsaw front were at this time under the command of Alexieff, whose keen mind had foreseen every contingency—a man who for weeks had realized the possibility of the loss of the Polish salient and the necessity of withdrawal to a line in the heart of Russia itself. Positions had been prepared at many places behind Warsaw which might be defended as checks to the German advance, which would enable strong rear guards to hold back the Teutons while the bulk of the armies were getting out of Poland. To one who had studied the country and who knew the weakness of the Russian Army at this time what followed was no surprise. Warsaw, even as the Dunajec line in Galicia, was the keystone of a front nearly a thousand miles long. The loss of this salient meant the starting in motion of the entire front. It meant that the line as a whole could not come to a standstill until

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every unit therein could rest on some position which would afford the chance of making a successful defense. The weak point, as I was well aware, was in the centre. It was certain that the army coming out of Warsaw could not find an advantageous position short of the Bug and the fortress of Brest-Litowsk. The latter point I had visited many times before, and having seen its antiquated defenses I was sure that if the Germans really wanted it that it could not resist forty-eight hours after the heavy guns got to work on its old-fashioned fortifications. With the centre falling back to or beyond the Bug it was clear that all the hundred and one places lying west of Brest would go as a by-product of the collapse of Warsaw itself. The world at large seemed to experience a new shock every time the Germans captured a new town, a shock which I may say was never felt in the army of the Russians, for everybody knew that the retreat once started would not terminate for weeks. Alexieff had planned every detail

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of the retreat in person and<sup>v</sup> there was only one point in the whole program which caused the slightest anxiety to the friends of Russia at the front, and that was whether or not the morale of the army after three consecutive months of reverses due to lack of ammunition and of rifles could stand the strain of a retreat that might last for several months. Having been with the Japanese in Manchuria and there becoming familiar with the extraordinary power of recuperation of the Russians, I felt reasonably confident that the men would not break and the critical period would be weathered and that the army would eventually get back onto a line where it could settle down for a sustained period of replenishment. Personally I thought that this line would be as far east as the Dwina, Berizina, and Dneiper rivers and was agreeably surprised when the German initiative spent itself far west of this river, line, which would have given the Teutons an admirable point to have stopped for the winter.

## XIII

THE BEGINNING OF THE RETREAT AND THE  
POLITICAL SITUATION

FROM the time that Warsaw fell there was a period of great anxiety in Russia unalleviated by news from the front. The only information one received from Poland and the battle-fields north and south were reports that leaked in from the German side. The loss of Ivangrod and Novogeorgievsk came as a great shock to Petrograd, though just why it should have I do not know, for both were doomed the moment Warsaw fell. Ivangrod was an old-fashioned fortress that could not have lasted a day against a heavy artillery attack. Its evacuation immediately after the fall of the Polish Capital was inevitable and passed without any notice at all in the army. Novoge-

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orgievsk which protected Warsaw from the north was a modern fortress and held out approximately two weeks. This strong point on the important line of railroad from East Prussia, Mlawa, and Ciechanow to Praga was a block on the line of advance the Germans must follow to get at the retreating Russians. Had it fallen the day Warsaw did it is probable that none of that army would have got out at all. This war has shown conclusively that fortresses must be regarded as checks to enemy advances at strategic points rather than as positions that can be held indefinitely and withstand prolonged sieges. The sacrifice of Novogeorgievsk and its garrison was of course regrettable, but it was the price that had to be paid to insure the escape of the Russian centre. I do not know what the Russians lost in men and guns by the taking of this fortress, but its two-week defense was worth to the Russians the loss of several army corps, and I doubt if it cost that much. With the

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loss of this fortress the taking of Bialostok became merely a matter of days, and with the fall of that important city Grodno in turn was doomed. The fact that this fortress was designed (as I have been credibly informed) by a German engineer now serving on Hindenburg's staff no doubt led to its capture earlier than might otherwise have happened. The only point on the eastern front which was a distinct disappointment to the Russians was Kovno, which only withstood the German attacks for relatively a few days when it should have held out for weeks at least, being one of the newest and supposedly most modern of all the defenses on the Russian frontier. Its capitulation, I am sorry to say, was probably due to treachery on the part of some of the command within the fortress. Certainly a high ranking officer was removed from command and is said to be languishing in a dungeon somewhere in Russia to-day. The loss of Kovno was really the only ugly blot in the



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entire retreat as far as I know. The German advance in the centre meeting meagre resistance arrived with due celerity in front of Brest-Litowsk. From talks I have had with German sympathizers since I am inclined to believe that the Germans expected and hoped for a Russian stand here where they could deliver a decisive and crushing blow. Their disappointment must have been great when they found the Muscovites again in motion and themselves faced with an advance into a country beyond the Bug containing no town or city for hundreds of miles that any one outside of Russia had ever heard of. The German papers announced vast captures of munitions at Brest. I cannot imagine what they were, because when I passed that way shortly ahead of the enemy there was but a meagre accumulation of anything though it was then the base on which a number of armies were drawing for supplies. No doubt a congestion of empty caissons and a few





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shells in the town itself were dangled before the German correspondents as a great prize. One must let the Germans get all the pleasure they can out of Brest-Litowsk, for certainly it was the last golden spot the army that captured it can look back on for the 1915 campaign. As I have tried to show what had happened at the actual front after Warsaw, though depressing and to be deprecated, was not in any way the great disaster on which the Germans alone could count for forcing an independent peace with Russia, the goal of all their hopes. But there did develop in Petrograd at this time a political situation which presented the most serious menace that Russia has faced since the war started, and this was the created reports that an independent peace was pending. Petrograd has always been filled with German interests and German sympathizers and from the day that the war started it has been replete with calamity howlers endeavoring to discourage the population and

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to convince them that the cause of the Czar was hopelessly lost. From the loss of Samsonov's army in the first month of the war to the time of writing there has never been a Russian check or reverse at the front that has not been circulated in an hour in all quarters of Russia's capital. So active were these propagandists that they did not wait even for the fall of Warsaw before they started in to break down public confidence. When the news finally came that the Polish city was lost there started malicious and specious propaganda in Petrograd which have probably never been equalled. Every report which could discourage the population was circulated. On every side one heard statements that the Allies were not in accord, that England made the war and had purposely held her hand that Russia might be destroyed by Germany; that the government itself was suspicious of the Alliance and was only seeking an opportunity to make an independent peace with Germany.

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This line of propaganda started with the fall of Warsaw and increased every time the Germans took a new town or village, which was practically every day for a month. Such headway did this slander make that within a few weeks a large portion of the simple people of Petrograd began to believe it. And the third week people outside of Petrograd began to talk about it, and at last the same rumors began to circulate in the army. There was, I think, no real danger at any time in Petrograd, for the government I sincerely believe has never seriously considered any such move from the day war began, but the circulation of these stories in an army that had been retreating for months was like the injection of a malignant microbe in a culture. The morale of an army which could not be shaken by defeats, losses, or retreats was as a matter of fact seriously menaced for a few days by the malicious rumors which somehow or other found their way back. I do not

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think that there was ever at any time any immediate danger to the army because the Russian is slow to take an idea, but the germ that was working threatened ultimately to affect the spirits of the soldiers to a degree that might have proven disastrous. The government met this growing danger by the issuance of a statement by Sazonov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, categorically denying in behalf of the Russian government all these false reports and definitely stating that there would never be an independent peace while there remained a single enemy on Russian soil. This announcement checked the flood of false report for the moment, and the announcement a few weeks later that the Czar would take command of the army in person absolutely dissipated it. Every one in Russia said at once, "It is clear that the Czar is staking his dynasty on success, for he is taking the little Grand Duke and the heir to the throne with him." From the moment that the Em-

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peror went to the front in person this danger was eliminated, and though certain reverses occurred later, there has, I think, never been a really hazardous situation to Russia or the Russian arms since the day that the Tenth Russian Army made good its escape from Vilna. As this stands as one of the greatest strategic achievements of the war, it is, I think, quite worth a separate chapter.

## XIV

### THE ESCAPE FROM VILNA

EARLY in September it was already clear that the bulk of the Russian Army had evaded the disaster that the Germans had planned for it. Heavy fighting had been going on all along the line, but skilful handling by Alexieff, who was in personal charge of the operations, had resulted in the withdrawal of the armies of the Czar from practically every point on their line where there remained any possibility of the Germans scoring a heavy blow against them, with the single exception of Vilna in the north. The Teutons, who had been straining every nerve to make the retreat a rout, had failed signally, and the best that they could do was to follow up the Russian retirement, cutting off stragglers and

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capturing batches of prisoners here and there where the Russian rear guards became separated from the main body of the retreating army. I cannot estimate the Russian losses in this retreat, but I question if they were any greater than those suffered by the pursuing enemy. But for some reason or other the Russians held on to Vilna, permitting the Germans to drive back the Russian armies that flanked the Vilna Army both on the north and on the south, thus leaving the city itself in an extremely dangerous salient. The Germans were not far from Riga in the north, and were pushing hard for the whole Dwina line, while the retreat in the south left the enemy well advanced on the southern flank of Warsaw. I was at this time with the armies of General Ruszky, then in command of the northern group, and it was expected daily that the Vilna Army, the Tenth, would fall back on the line of the railroad to Petrograd and take up its position near Dwinsk, thus

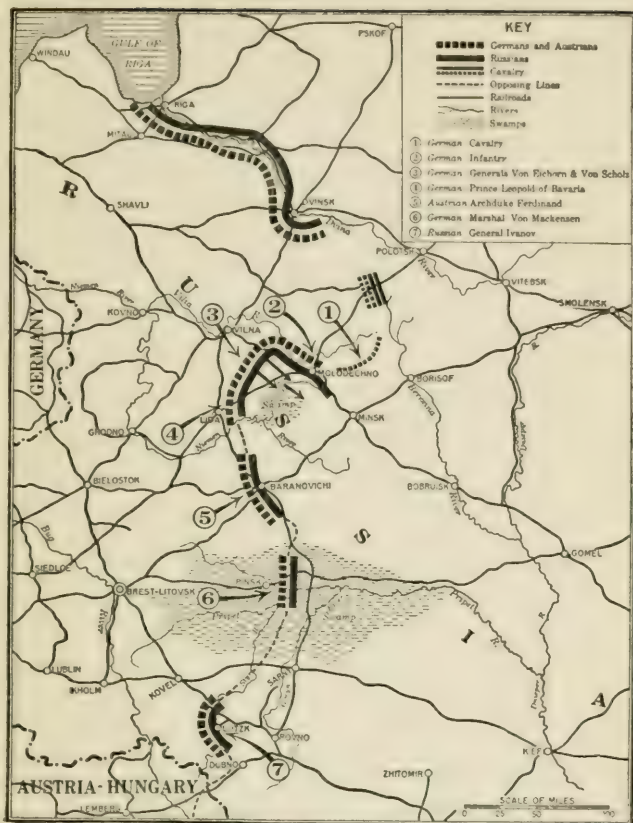


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giving the Russians much needed reinforcements on that very important strategical line that stretched from Riga to the Petrograd-Vilna Railroad at Dwinsk. Just why this army did not come out sooner is not clear. Perhaps the Czar, who had just taken over the command, did not wish to inaugurate his assumption of military authority by the evacuation of so important a post as Vilna. In any event, while the Tenth Army still lingered in front of Vilna, the Germans in a sweeping cavalry raid cut the Petrograd line of railroad at a point southwest of Dwinsk, and thus shut off the Vilna Army from its base and source of supplies, not to mention closing the avenue of communications upon which it expected to retire to the reinforcement of General Ruszky's group in the north. German advances to the south then left the Tenth Army surrounded on three sides by the enemy, and a few days later the German cavalry cut the Russian line of railroad at Molodechno

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and established themselves on the highway which was the only other route that the Vilna Army could follow to enable it to rejoin the main body of the Russian forces. The German raiding column was said to be composed of thirteen and one-half divisions of cavalry, or a number probably not far short of 40,000 sabres, not to mention moderate supports of artillery. Thus we see that the Germans at last had pulled off a coup in strategy such as they had been planning for months. For once it seemed as though they had achieved their aims and had actually bagged an enormous Russian Army. The moment the news of the movement reached Petrograd the German sympathizers were busy as usual, and it was stated on every side that the Tenth Army had been entirely destroyed and that what had not been killed or wounded was in German hands. Certainly the enemy never have had a better opportunity in the war to inflict a disaster, and certainly no man ever



The Battle of Vilna, September 13-24, 1915



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performed a finer feat than Alexieff in getting this army out of the hole in which it had become involved. It is impossible at this time to give the details of this operation, but when they become known Alexieff will be accorded the honor which is his due, of being one of the greatest living strategists. He was at this time miles away at the General Headquarters, of which he had become the real head, being subordinate only to the Czar himself. When this situation developed he locked himself up in his office and during the delicate days that followed directed the entire movement of the Tenth Army in person. With the telegraph and field wireless he was in direct communication with the surrounded army, and one of his personal aides informed me that he supervised the movements even of divisions and brigades, going over the heads of the generals in direct command. Alexieff knew his army thoroughly from one end of the line to the other, and he at once started movements in every direction,

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which resulted in confusing the enemy as to what he was really about. Demonstrations here and there along the line prevented the Germans from supporting properly, while the potential menaces which he created in the south threatened the German column which was flanking the Vilna Army from that direction with a disaster of its own. In the meantime counter-attacks by the rear guard and other demonstrations checked the German pursuit, and while they were still pressing on the northern flank the centre cut its way out at Molodechno, going through the German cavalry like brown paper. What happened was not in the least surprising to any one who knew the army, and I cabled the *Times* days before that the Tenth Army would escape. It was clear that the Germans to make this cavalry movement would have to travel fast, and at the speed necessary to gain their objective they could carry but a small amount of horse artillery and a limited amount of muni-

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tions. It was equally certain that they would reach the end of their long ride badly exhausted. The army of Vilna consisted of seven of the finest corps of the Russian Army. It was certain that when they started out their heavy guns and the bulk of their ammunition would go first, and the first corps following would be those the longest out of heavy action and hence the freshest for a fight. The Germans, therefore, tired and exhausted, with only a small amount of light artillery, went up against the heavy Russian guns first, with a fresh corps in the Russian van and six others coming behind that, with the Russian Guard holding the rear. The result was that the German force dissipated utterly before the Russians, and the Teutons lost their last chance of 1915 to score an important disaster. This movement really marked the last phase in the retreat from Warsaw. When one comes to size it all up one cannot but conclude that the operations following Warsaw must



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have been a tremendous disappointment to the Germans. Every army, from that of Loesche on the Chelm-Lublin line to the Tenth at Vilna, had successfully escaped from the clutches of the Germans after inflicting losses which must have run well up in the hundreds of thousands for the Germans, and by the last of September the Russians had brought them to a standstill.

## XV

### THE DEFENSE OF PETROGRAD

WITH the fall of Kovno and renewed and energetic advances in the direction of Riga in latter August a wave of apprehension swept Petrograd, and there was a period of perhaps ten days when it was freely prophesied that the Germans would be in the capital city by the first of the new year. The evacuation of Vilna fed the panic, which, as may be imagined, was encouraged in every way by the German sympathizers. At this time General Ruszky, who had been recuperating from illness in the Caucasus, where he had been since March, was appointed to the command of the so-called Northern Group of Armies, which were those stationed along the line of the Dwina River from Riga to south of Dwinsk,

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or Düna, as the Germans called it. This army was the army of the Petrograd defense. To hear the talk then rife in Petrograd one might have imagined the Germans were just outside the city limits instead of being nearly four hundred miles away, with an important group of armies between them and their goal. Had the Tenth Army, which had been in Vilna, left earlier and come back to Ruzsky, there would have been no chance at all for the enemy to have broken the Dwina line, but with this army going off southeast and thus stripping the Northern Group of the seven corps which had been expected, Ruzsky was put to his trumps to hold the Germans back, and for a week or so the situation did not look any too bright for the Russians. The German line, after the Vilna movement had died away, was stalled from Galicia to Dwinsk and had been forced to halt just where its momentum had evaporated. It is absurd to imagine that the German line south of Dwinsk

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was one picked by themselves. As a matter of fact it represents the point where their capacity to advance gave out, and their movement halted as an arrow falls to earth, because there was no longer any driving power behind it. The attack in the west in September took the final drive out of the Germans, and by the last of September the only possible strategic aim in the east which they could hope for was the line from Riga to Dwinsk, which would at least give them the satisfaction of claiming that they had reached the point that they had planned to attain for their winter line.

Ever since the preceding May the Germans had been operating in Courland, and it was believed by the Russians again and again that Riga was about to fall. In September, when all of the German strategic aims were gradually evaporating and Riga and Dwinsk were the only hope left, the Germans began a series of heavy attacks all along this line. Ruzsky was extremely short of men, but was based on

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Petrograd and had the best railroad communications that the Russian railway system affords, and hence was able to put up a defense which, though often hard pressed, never collapsed, with the result that by October 1st the German opportunity to get even this last goal was gone for the winter and probably forever. During this fighting I made several visits to Ruzsky and travelled nearly a thousand miles in his theatre of operations, visiting the positions in a number of places, and here for the first time since the beginning of the war I began to detect that subtle seepage of morale which was beginning to manifest itself among the German soldiers. I saw a group of prisoners near Dwinsk, and their point of view was extremely significant: "We have been deceived," was the typical way their case was viewed. "We were told all summer that if we could take Warsaw we would have peace with Russia. Well, we took Warsaw months ago, and nothing came of

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it. After that we took Grodno, Kovno, and now we have taken Vilna, and still nothing comes of it. For months we have been told that Riga was about to fall. It hasn't, and we do not see the end of the war even if we can cross the Dwina River. It is hundreds of miles to any place, and the winter is coming on. What have we to gain? We see no peace in sight." More significant still was the class of man one found in these days. No longer formations of young men of approximately the same size and age, but companies containing individuals ranging in age from nineteen to forty-nine years and in height from five feet two to over six feet. Many of these were men who had been withdrawn from industrial life and whose intellectual initiative was so much more developed that they did not care to attack again and again unless there seemed to be a chance of success. In the earlier days of the war the Germans used to attack fifteen and twenty

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times in a day. I suppose the first line composed of young men never asked questions, but it is different with these older men. One rarely hears now of attacks being made more than four or five times in a day on the same positions, and if they fail to develop a weakness in the Russian line another point is tried elsewhere. I cannot speak, of course, of the Germans in the west, but allude only to the situation that I have seen in the east. The result is that the Germans now in Russia, from the fact that they have lost such volumes of young men, are gradually losing their capacity to drive home attacks, because the new troops have not the punch of those being marshalled for war a year ago. If my statement seems doubtful, I can refer to the reports published largely in the German press late in the fall which stated that Hindenburg had sent back for more training several formations that had come up to him on the Dwina front. To offset the falling in the quality of their



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troops the Germans are redoubling their efforts to keep up a superiority of material. Machine guns, heavy howitzers, field artillery, and limitless quantities of shells and munitions must now be increasingly the assets with which they fight, and as they begin to turn toward material as a substitute for men it is increasingly clear that the day of a strictly defensive German attitude is not so many months distant. I cannot tell what the last frantic German efforts on the Dwina cost them, but I do know that at the last fight which I attended there were 147 German dead on the barb wire in front of a single Russian company as the product of a single night's fighting. Most of these were men drawn from the red blood of German industrial life. Each represented a productive unit and formed an integral part of that system of trade and industry which has made the German Empire. One of these men whose efficiency from a military point of view is half

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that of the first line is a greater loss to the empire than two of the younger men that were killed last year, for these men who are now being buried in tens of thousands on foreign battlefields are the ones upon whom Germany must count if she is to hope to rebuild her trade and repair her wasted industries.

## XVI

### SUMMARY OF THE SITUATION TO NOVEMBER 1ST, 1915

WITH the final evaporation of their opportunities to take the Dwina line the German initiative in the east was suspended. Sufficient time has now elapsed to enable one to get a little perspective on the summer's campaign. As the Russians view it, Germany has failed. Her aim in Russia has been an independent peace. Warsaw, which was supposed to represent that goal, was taken, and no peace came. From talks with German prisoners I am inclined to believe that the Germans felt that the Russian edifice was shaken like a house of cards when Warsaw fell, and that every step they advanced thereafter might prove the last straw which would break

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down the Russian resistance entirely and throw them into political chaos. When it became clear that Warsaw had not produced the expected result it was hoped that the capture of Brest-Litowsk, which was on the frontier of Russia itself, would be the finishing touch. The Germans arrived there only to see the Russians slipping off into their spaces to the east a few days later. I think history will judge the German advance beyond the Bug and Brest-Litowsk as a colossal blunder. In the first place, there was no place within hundreds of miles of the Bug eastward that had sufficient strategic importance to warrant the sacrifices which a winter campaign was sure to involve. At this time Petrograd, Moscow, and Kiev were the only points the capture of which would have materially helped the German cause. Not one of these was attainable to them. In the second place, the moment they set their feet into Russia proper, whatever chance they had before of

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getting peace with Russia, and that was small enough, evaporated over night. For weeks we find them trading German lives which they could not spare for the bleak winter landscape of "holy Russia," which the Russians can give away by the tens of thousands of square miles and never miss. Ultimately the line came to a halt in the most dismal and desolate country one can imagine. It stretches to-day through swamp and forest, over wind-swept plains and near a few primitive villages. What have the Germans to show for their enterprise since September? A huge casualty list and an army of men no longer young sitting in the snow and cold of barren Russia waiting for—what? A chance to involve themselves still deeper in the spaces of Russia this summer or a retreat, seems to one who knows the country and the Russian Army to be their only alternatives. What, then, have the million or two casualties that Germany has spent on Russia in the last eighteen

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months profited her? Territory is the only reply, and that is hers only if she can beat not only Russia but the Allies in the west as well. If the German strength is broken in the heart of Russia, as it may well be, it serves the cause of the Allies and of Russia, too, as well as though the final collapse came in Germany itself. All of the conquered territory will come back to Russia in a day by treaty agreement, and the German sacrifices will represent a net and total loss. In the meantime, when even the best friend of Germany must admit that she has passed the zenith of her resources both in men and material, Russia has passed her ebb tide and is getting stronger day by day. I have heard tales of only old men left in Russia to fight. This is a mere fiction. There are two million of Russia's young manhood trained and awaiting only arms to go to the front. Can Germany ever again put in this war two million young men in the field? Russia can put twice that this year if she gets





The winter lines, November, 1915





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material, and a million a year thereafter for as long as the war lasts. The Russian tide is coming in as the German is beginning to ebb. What Germany failed to do in 1915, when her fortunes were at their zenith and Russia had nothing but character with which to oppose her, she certainly will not accomplish in 1916, when Russia is gaining strength and material daily. The friends of Germany point with pride at the map to show the uninterrupted success of the Teutons by their advances in Serbia. It may seem absurd to criticise an army that is sweeping victoriously ahead, but one must judge from a wider perspective than pins on a map. Personally I think the German-Serbian campaign will prove to have brought her not one step nearer to her aims and will even hasten her ultimate collapse.

It must be clear that after eighteen months of war no objective is justifiable that spells sacrifice without definitely advancing the

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chances of forcing peace. What the German-Serbian move represents is this: for more than a year decisions had been sought in the east and in the west, where alone peace might be forced if victory were attained. These decisions have not been attained. Germany then swings into Serbia and secures more victories. What is to profit her? Does any one imagine that the decision of this war lies in the Balkans, Asia Minor, or even in Egypt, or India for that matter? If they do they vastly underestimate the psychology of England. Great Britain might lose both India and Egypt and the world would find her farther from making peace than the day war started, and incidentally only just ready to make war. Does any one imagine German successes in the Balkans are going to affect France or Russia? If so they are building on sand. What, then, does the German campaign there represent? Merely this: that at a time when it is increasingly clear that the

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great decision lies in Europe she is committing herself to a long and costly series of operations, in a theatre where the best she can hope for is to impair the prestige of the Allies. Ultimately she will be checked there as well. What then? Either a continuous drain on her resources to hold her advanced line or a retreat with less of prestige. In other words, Germany, with two bungholes open in her barrel of resources, has suddenly tapped still a third, and by just so much is advancing the day of her final period of exhaustion. I think the German campaign is analogous to an individual who has started in to corner wheat. After a bit he has purchased so heavily that he must either buy all that is offered or see a break in the market and himself ruined. So it is with the Germans. By success they keep their stock up, and when failure faces them in their objectives on one front they mortgage their patrimony and start something on another that will keep their boom going a

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little longer. The German campaign in Serbia, to continue the analogy, is like the man in the wheat pit who has finally mortgaged his house to raise the last dollar to keep up the price of wheat to prevent its absolute collapse. His problem has become a simple one: buy the whole wheat crop or go into bankruptcy. So with the Germans: they must keep boosting their stock somewhere regardless of cost or face the issue of ruin which failure to keep advancing spells. The Russian Army is now in the hands of Alexieff, the cleverest and most capable general the Russians have ever had in their history. He knows his army from the Bukowina to the Baltic. He is a man of few words, but what he says he means.

I cannot do better than to close this chapter with his own words: "Undiscouraged and undemoralized, the Russian Army now stands based on the centre of the Russian Empire, with confidence in itself and faith in its ca-

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

capacity to advance when the opportunity presents itself."

That Alexieff spoke the truth is obvious if one reads the reports from Galicia for the first two weeks in January, 1916.

## XVII

### RUSSIA AN EMPIRE OF AMERICAN OPPORTUNITY

RUSSIA is one of the biggest countries in the world and with one of the largest populations. It is the country to-day of the greatest opportunity for American trade that commercial history has ever offered to this country, yet it is the country that is least known and least understood by us of any nation in the world. Because it is a long way off and has never attempted to speak for itself it has come to pass that Russia has been more frequently misrepresented than any of the nations of Europe. The fiction of a cruel race typified by brutal soldiery has passed current so long that half the world has come to believe it, a fiction be it said which has been made for the greater



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part out of whole cloth. As the war progresses it is just beginning to be realized in America that there is a strong possibility that Russia will emerge from this great conflict as one of the great dominant world factors of the future not only from the military point of view but as an enormous empire of 170,000,000 population emerging from a lethargy of centuries to take for the first time its proper place in the commercial and industrial life of the world. And in this period comes the great opportunity for America and Americans to secure for themselves a market for their exports such as South America and China combined will not in a generation equal.

To understand why this great opportunity now lies open for us to take up practically for the asking it is necessary to consider a little the relations of the past generation that have existed between Germany and Russia. For a decade or two, as all the world knows, the German trade has been with intelligent in-

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

dustry pushing its tenacles into all parts of the world, but preëminently it has been engaged in quietly but surely absorbing the Russian markets. The effects of this sweeping campaign to get the Russian field of trade has not been popular with the Russians from the first, for even at the start it became obvious to close observers that the Germans, with their cheap goods delivered all over Russia, were gradually choking all Russian industrial initiative, for few in Russia could start an industry and face the German competition. This aspect of the German trade alone caused great uneasiness among those who really had the interests of Russia at heart, but this aspect proved to be of minor importance when it gradually dawned on Russia that German industry and trade meant not only a commercial influence but a political influence the strength of which was not realized until the war broke out, when it was discovered that the Germans had for years been exerting

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

a power on Russian affairs that had not been realized. It is difficult to prove a legal case against the Germans, but the Russians claim that for ten years this subtle Teuton influence, moving through a thousand hidden channels and acting in devious ways, had been behind every move looking toward the enlightenment of Russia; for very obviously an educated and reformed Russia meant the beginning of the end of German sway, and for it spelled not only the curtailment of German commercial inroads but it likewise heralded an efficient and growing army which was the bugbear of the Russian military cast. Russians claim that German influence delayed the abolition of vodka for years, that German intrigue and wiles have for ten years opposed secretly every program looking toward the education of the peasants, and in fact working against any and every program that spelled a progress which would change Russia so that she would no longer be the prey of her clever neighbor. On

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the outbreak of the war, when Warsaw was threatened, there was a great outcry because the permanent forts of Warsaw had been dismantled three years before. "Who did it and why?" was the question on everybody's lips. "German influence in the War Office at Petrograd," was the reply that was believed all over the Russian Empire. When the Russians blew up their bridges in the retreat from Kalish (Poland) the Germans had a new steel one operating in sixteen hours. "How could it be possible?" was the question asked in Petrograd. Inquiry disclosed the fact that the bridge was built by German engineers and that duplicate parts from original drawings were constructed before the war started and were actually on flat cars ready to be rushed to the front when the first bridge was destroyed. Russia, and perhaps some of the rest of the world, also wondered how it was that the Germans in their advance after Warsaw were able to take so quickly certain Rus-

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sian forts. The answer was simple: German influence working through Petrograd before the war had been sufficiently strong to have had these forts designed by German engineers. I was told on fairly good authority that the man who actually laid out one of the most important forts on the Russian frontier, opposite East Prussia, has in this war been an officer on the staff of Von Hindenburg. These are but a few concrete incidents of what German influence has meant in Russia. The country has been overrun with spies; Poland was flooded with enemy agents who were as eager to serve Germany with information as they had been before to supply Teuton markets with Russian orders. Perhaps it is not strange, then, that Russia to-day is looking for a substitute for the German trade. "What we want," the Russians say, "is a trade that will supply us with our wants, but that will bring with it no political influence." Naturally and logically, then, the eyes of intelli-

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gent business men have been looking toward America to step into the breach and fill the gaps in trade which the cessation of relations with Germany has created. "We are determined to rid ourselves of this influence," Serge Sazonov, the Imperial Minister of Foreign Affairs in Petrograd, has said to me ten times if he has said it once: "Why are you Americans doing nothing to take advantage of this extraordinary condition in the Russian market? Russia wants American trade, and anything which the government can do legitimately to encourage this trade will be done and gladly." This, then, is the situation in Russia of a market which includes the manufactured wants to a large extent of 170,000,000, with a government eager and anxious to welcome Americans and American trade. What have Americans done to take advantage of this situation to date? Practically nothing other than send over agents who have landed in regiments with one idea,



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and that how to make a million in a week by selling war material at fabulous sums.

The first step in trade relations with Russia, as must be clear to all who have given the matter any thought, is a new trade treaty with Russia which should be negotiated at once. As will probably be remembered by most Americans, the old treaty with Russia was abrogated on account of the complaints of the Jews that they did not receive equality of rights with other American citizens when travelling in Russia. The question of the Jews is a delicate one to handle, but the Russian treatment of the Jews in this war has been, all things considered, extremely lenient, and many measures looking toward the alleviation of the conditions of the Jews in Russia are under way. When I say that the Russian treatment of the Jews has been lenient in this war I am quite well aware that I shall be contradicted vehemently by many persons, for certainly the German press agents have not



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been slow to capitalize Jewish sentiment by piling up stories of alleged Jewish atrocities. I cannot, of course, prove a negative and state that there have been no excesses in regard to the Hebrews, but I can say this: that I have been, as correspondent of the London *Times*, with instructions to look out for this very aspect, in the theatre of operations from October, 1914, to November 1, 1915, and in all of this time I have seen nothing to warrant any statements of wide-spread Russian cruelty to the Jews, nor have I received any evidence from any credible source to establish the truth of any such story. During these months I suppose that I have been in not less than 1,000 villages in Russia covering country all the way from the Bukowina to the Baltic, and barring the expulsion of Jews from the war zone I have seen nothing whatever that can be considered as an outrage on the Jews. The expulsion of the Jews from the theatre of operations was undoubtedly a hardship, but considering

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the fact that at a later period Russians, Poles, and all of the rest of the population to a total aggregating 13,000,000 was expelled by the order of the Russians, this hardship cannot be considered as falling particularly upon the Jews. I think it safe to say that the major portion of the Jews in Poland were pro-German in their sympathies, and that the greater portion of spies in Poland proved guilty were Jews. Yet there has been at no time during the war in Russia any, save possibly isolated cases of which I have no information, persecution of the Jews. On the contrary, at a time when suspicions are most widely spread, the government has shown its desire to render the conditions of the Jews in Russia better than ever before. Hebrews in America who really wish to help the lot of their race in Russia can do much more by encouraging American trade relations and American influence in Russia at a time when Russia is looking with liberal eyes upon many aspects

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of western life, than by taking up the cause of a few individuals who have had passport troubles in Russia.

The question has been raised by many as to whether or not the Germans would not be back in the Russian market the moment the war was over, and if with their cheap goods they would not at once destroy American enterprise. This I think will not happen. In the first place, there are many American lines that can beat the German under any conditions in the Russian market. The International Harvester Company is one example and the Singer Sewing Machine Company is another. Both of these concerns went to Russia and taught the Russian peasants to use commodities that they had never before heard of. In other words, they created a market and then built plants to handle the demand in Russia. The Singer Sewing Machine Company has a factory near Moscow that employs more than 5,000 men, while its products

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are to be seen in every quarter of Russia. I think I have never seen on the roads from the front a party of refugees fleeing before the Germans where there was not at least one Singer sewing machine in the cart of family treasures. This I quote to show that even under the old conditions, when German trade and German influence were at their zenith, intelligent American effort had a chance. But now aside from these lines I believe that American trade will not for years be seriously pushed by the Germans in Russia, for the reason that the Germans will not be able in the near future to make trade in the way that enabled them before to secure the Russian market.

The reason that Germany was able to capture the Russian trade, and for that matter the South American and Far Eastern markets as well, was because she has been able to offer credits for long times, often up to and even beyond a year in length, and, secondly, be-

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cause she has been able to flood the market on this basis with extremely cheap goods in enormous volume. When this war is finished Germany will not have the financial back to offer anybody long lines of credit. After eighteen months' close observation of the German campaign in the east I am absolutely certain that she has long since lost the chance to win on a scale which would give her any indemnity from any quarter, which means that any success she might get would be without financial returns on a scale that would begin to pay for the war, much less help her refinance her lost trade. As a matter of fact, I think that Germany has now lost even the chance to get a stalemate, and that with each month of the war her probability of defeat increases. However, that is not a subject for discussion here. I think it fair to assume, however, that her opportunity to finance her trade with long-time credits is gone, and her first great trade asset thus eliminated for at

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least a decade. Let us next consider her second great advantage in capturing the Russian market—namely, her capacity to offer cheap goods in large volume. This I think she has also lost. In the first place, two very important aspects of cheapness in production in Germany have been volume of production and skilled labor. When the war is over the German trade with Russia will be approximately at zero. If she is to make low prices she must produce on a large scale, but this will be impossible because the market for the moment is gone. It would, of course, be possible to run stock against the day when these markets were won back, but this, too, would necessitate a huge capital for carrying charges, a capital which Germany will not have available. It is certain, then, that when she begins to turn her industrial engines again she will do so at first on a small scale at an increased cost of production. Another important item to be considered in production is skilled labor.



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It is hardly necessary to call attention to the enormous losses in nearly every line of skilled labor, save only munition makers, that Germany has suffered. With each month of the war she is losing increasingly types of men that she cannot for a generation duplicate. Her first line troops had not yet come on to the industrial market, and though a potential asset were not yet digested into her system of manufacture and distribution. The new formations which she is now sacrificing so freely are the very red blood of German industrial life. It is largely by and through them that she might regain her trade and her prosperity, but verily she is slowly but surely killing all of her geese that lay the golden eggs of trade and industry in her empire. With no credit, with her skilled labor largely buried in foreign battlefields, and with her capacity to produce in large volume gone, we see Germany at the end of this war stripped of her greatest aids to foreign trade. For these reasons it seems



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more than likely that Americans in Russia will have at least a decade to work into these markets before Germany is in a condition to seriously compete.

Pascal, the French philosopher, once said: "To govern is to foresee." It is true of trade. If Americans wish to dominate in trade they must foresee to-day. Russia, the empire of opportunity, lies ready and waiting. Are there none in America with vision and foresight enough to see, above the smoke of bursting shells and burning villages, the great permanent market that lies between the Baltic and the Pacific, a market worth billions? *If so the time is now.*

## XVIII

### GENERAL ALEXIEFF

Imperial Headquarters, Russia,  
October 17th, 1915.

ONE of the big characters of the great war is the new Chief-of-Staff of the Russian Army, who, under the Czar himself, is the supreme commander of the Russian might. Alexieff, who should not be confused, as he has been in a number of the English and French papers, with Admiral Alexieff of Manchuria fame, is one of the most unique characters that I have ever met. He is a man of about fifty-eight years, whose sole interest in life from boyhood has been the profession of soldiering. He has no recreations save work, and he lives practically twenty-four hours of the day for the single purpose of winning this war. I have

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met many generals in this and other wars, but can say without reservation that Alexieff is the hardest worker that I have ever known either in the military or any other profession. He rises at 7:00 every morning from the little camp cot that is in his office, and works without intermission until 1:15, when he walks or motors to the club where the staff lunches at 1:30. He leaves here not later than 2:30 and works the entire afternoon until 7:30, when he dines with his staff. After dinner he walks for one hour and then takes up the unfinished business of the day, which never is completed before midnight and often takes him until two or three o'clock in the morning. He is a man of absolute simplicity and without any frills whatever. He is so quiet that his reserve borders on shyness. He speaks only Russian, and from observing him at table twice a day for nearly two weeks I am inclined to believe he speaks very little even of that except for the purpose of giving orders. He has no

## VICTORY IN DEFEAT

small talk, but this lack of conversation is offset by ideas which in the fewest possible words are translated into action at the front. He does nearly all of his own work, and under only the Emperor makes nearly all of the plans. "Who are his advisers?" I asked one of his aides. The Colonel laughed as he replied: "We should call them assistants rather," he said; "the General does his own advising." In a word, the General Staff to-day is as nearly a one-man executive enterprise as one can well imagine. If one were to venture a criticism on Alexieff it would be that he works too hard and does a hundred things daily that men of lesser ability might do for him. He is mild and low spoken, but with that mysterious air of authority and character about him which brings quicker action from a well-modulated sentence from him than a torrent of boisterous language from most men. The best evidence of his capacity is the comment one hears well-nigh universally in every

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army: "Ah, yes, Alexieff! The best brain in the Russian Army." When His Majesty the Czar took command it was expected that his Chief-of-Staff would dine and lunch with him, as had been the case with the previous régime—that is, the Grand Duke and his chief-of-staff. Alexieff is said to have replied bluntly to the suggestion: "I am a soldier, Your Majesty, and not a courtier. It will save my time if I dine with the staff and give my every thought to the conduct of the war." So as it stands now the Emperor spends two hours daily with his Chief-of-Staff conferring and advising with him on the military situation, while Alexieff has the rest of the day to do his work unmolested. He is an extremely inaccessible man, not because he is unwilling to meet people, but because he begrudges every minute that is not spent productively, and the mere idea of a casual interview with him is utterly repulsive to him. If one has tangible and definite business with him on

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matters pertaining to the war or military situation he can be seen instantly. If not, one may wait for weeks without seeing him at all. What impresses one most, I think, in watching him among his generals is the awe his simple and modest personality inspires in all about him. Probably he himself does not in the least notice it, for he impresses me as the least self-conscious individual I have ever seen. The moment he enters the room an absolute hush falls on everybody, and generals as well as younger officers stand aside like orderlies before him.

Probably no general in this war does more in the way of actual direction than does Alexieff. Time and again when situations at the front become critical he reaches over the heads of group and army commanders and directs the tactics of individual corps in person. During the retreat from Warsaw, when I was many times at his staff at Sedlice, he personally supervised innumerable details of the great



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retreat, which up to that time was one of the most brilliant bits of defensive strategy which history affords. During those chaotic weeks, when I was in practically all of these armies, I discovered again and again that Alexieff himself was guiding the movements of even army corps. At this time, when he had under him nine armies, he was still able to take the time to watch every detail himself, and yet was not too busy to do other things as well. Three or four days before Warsaw was given up I arrived at Sedlice, with my motor running on its rims for lack of tires. I met Alexieff on the street and explained to him my difficulties. In spite of the pressure of the moment he stopped where he was, called up several officers, and did not return to his work until arrangements had been made for me to have new tires and benzine to carry me on my way. Nothing ruffles or discomposes him, and he seems to find time to do everything. Probably the most brilliant work that Alexieff has done



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has been the retreat of the Tenth Army from Vilna. I think that when the details of this movement are known Alexieff will be given a niche in the military Hall of Fame even if he never achieves anything else in this war. It is now well known that this army was enveloped on three sides and practically cut off from its neighbors, with the only avenue of retreat an extremely poor road. Pressed on all sides with superior numbers, its fate seemed desperate. It was feared that at last the Germans would complete one of their so often planned enveloping movements. In this crisis, when all Petrograd was already gossiping over the anticipated disaster, the Chief-of-Staff reached into the situation and from his little office directed every detail of the movement for the ten days that the army was getting out, which it did, as I am assured, without the loss of a single gun. The repetition again and again of these strokes of Alexieff have given him a great

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reputation in the army and enormously increased the morale of the troops and officers serving under him, and have, I dare say, inspired the Germans with a wholesome respect for his ability.

The General is a man who has risen to his exalted position sheerly through merit and nothing else. In the Manchuria campaign he reached the rank of Major-General and served with distinction as Quartermaster-General of the Third Army. After the war he was Chief-of-Staff of the Thirteenth Corps at Kiev, and later was professor and lecturer on strategy, tactics, and administration in the military college. On the outbreak of the war he became the Chief-of-Staff of the armies of Ivanov, and the records of the early months of the Galician campaign are evidence that he did not fail in his duties there. On March 17, 1915, he was placed in command of the Polish front, taking the place left by Ruzsky, whose ill health necessi-

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tated an interval of rest. Alexieff and his Chief-of-Staff, Goulevitch, from Sedlice directed the Warsaw movement, as is known. Army after army was transferred to the Alexieff group, until he had nine under his command, which became such a burden that the Northern Group was formed to relieve the intense pressure. Shortly after this the Emperor took supreme command, and at once Alexieff was made his Chief-of-Staff. We have already seen what he has been able to do in conducting a retreat, and if his Galician career is any criterion, we may hope for equally good results when the situation justifies the commencement of a general offensive.

THE END



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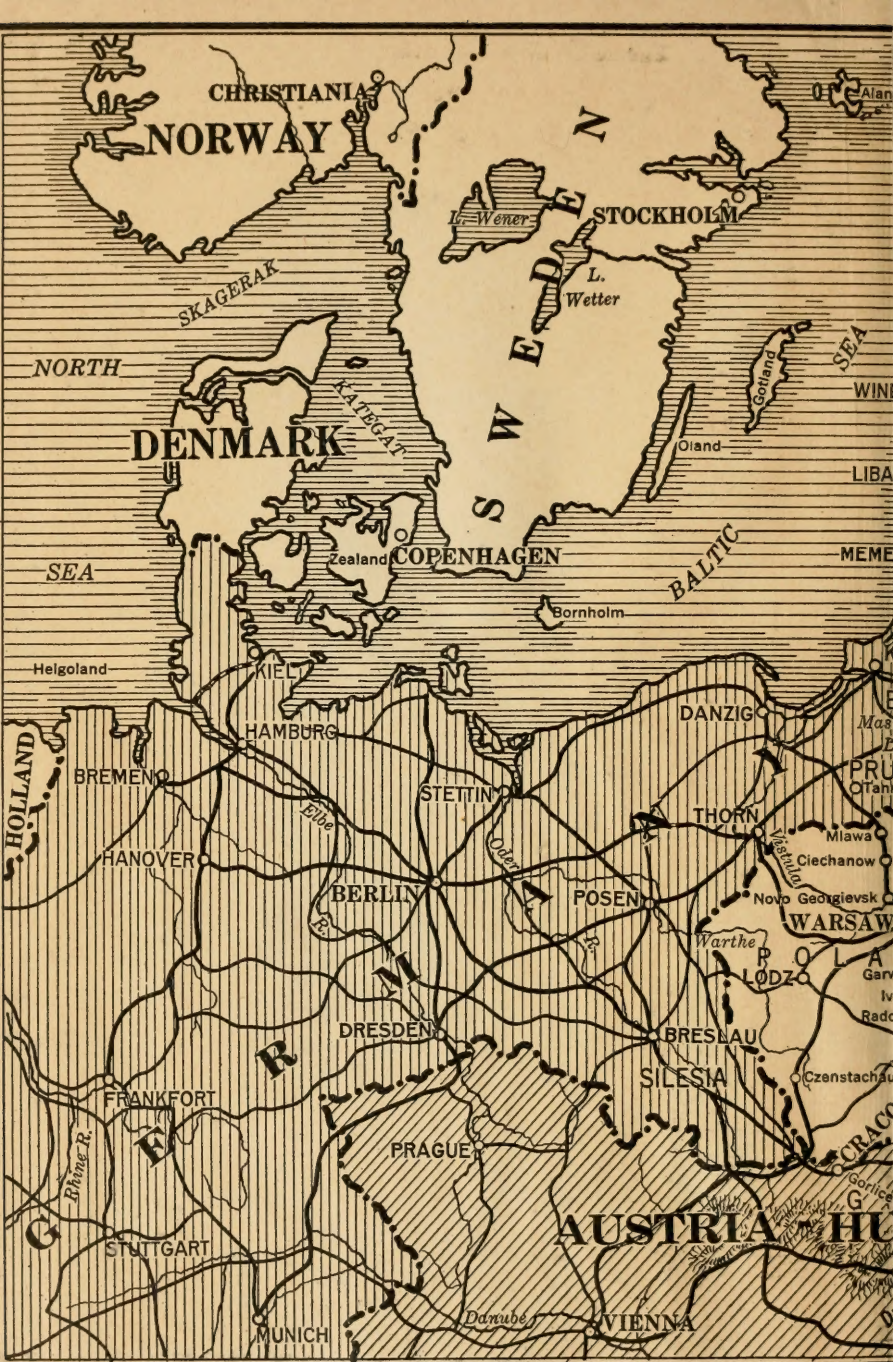
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